

## **CARD AND CONJURING TRICKS**

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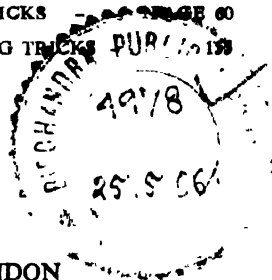
CARD TRICKS BY CHARLES ROBERTS

CONJURING TRICKS BY CHARLES CRAYFORD

WITH 102 HELPFUL ILLUSTRATIONS

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LONDON

W. FOULSHAM & CO. LTD

NEW YORK - TORONTO - CAPE TOWN - SYDNEY

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

*Printed by C. Tinkling & Co., Ltd., Liverpool, London, and Prescott*

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## INTRODUCTION TO CONJURING TRICKS

THE amateur conjurer usually experiences two very real difficulties with regard to magic—(1) Shortage of spare money; (2) adequate dexterity. Knowing this (for I was an amateur conjurer myself many years ago), I have collected and arranged a series of magical deceptions which are quite inexpensive to buy, and perfectly easy to perform. Of course, no conjuring trick will give an audience entire satisfaction unless it be properly worked up and embellished by suitable patter, which should be as humorous as possible. Moreover, it is not always the difficult tricks which are enjoyed most by the audience—indeed, quite the contrary. Experience teaches one that the easier the trick, the more likely it is to “go great” with the uninitiated. I have frequently found that the more elaborate and costly a trick, the less the applause! This may seem rather hard on the magician; but the nature of the particular trick will be of little consequence if he will but learn to *amuse* and *entertain*. So many “wizards” of to-day aim only at mystifying their audience, entirely overlooking the fact that all normal people appreciate real wit and humour, which, in my estimation, is the very life and soul of a magical entertainment.

I strongly recommend the novice to begin with, say, half a dozen simple tricks (for preference, those that appeal to him most), and really *learn* them—not play with them; remembering that there is no royal road to conjuring any more than there is to music or any other accomplishment.

In practically every large town there are shops specialising in conjurers’ accessories. At any of these all “props” required for the tricks herein given should be readily obtained—at a cost ranging from threepence upwards.



To conclude, do not make yourself too cheap by always thrusting your latest sleight upon anyone and everyone you happen to meet; never expose a trick, nor give away a secret; and remember that whilst conjuring as an art is exceedingly fascinating and entertaining, nothing could be more reprehensible or more contemptible than the obnoxious practice of what is termed "card-sharping."

CHARLES CRAYFORD  
"The Kentish Mystic."

## INTRODUCTION TO CARD TRICKS

I WAS fairly youthful when the ~~not~~ ~~un~~common ambition to become a "conjurer" took possession of me. Other ambitions have long since grown up and vastly overshadowed it. Yet never to its complete extinction; for I have found that the ability to perform a neat and mystifying little trick with a pack of ordinary playing cards is a distinct aid to social success, which, in its turn, is an undeniable asset to every man.

The secret of popularity lies in being *entertaining*, and there are many ways of achieving this, of course. But they none of them so invariably suit all manners of men as does a little exhibition of deftness with cards. Your conversation may be brilliant; you may have a fine voice; yet these attributes will only stand you in good stead in certain circumstances. Whereas, with some proficiency in card conjuring, you will find that, no matter what the circumstances, a dull interlude can nearly always be enlivened by a casual manifestation of your skill.

And this "skill" is by no means hard to acquire. My own early efforts were crowned with anything but success; but I know now that my failure was the direct result of tackling the problem in the wrong manner. I purchased books on "sleight-of-hand," and found that numberless very fine illusions were therein described. These, I discovered ultimately, all depended on ability to perform the operations of "the pass," "the change," and "palming," to which, so it transpired, I was expected to devote several weeks of practice as a preliminary!

Very soon, my hobby not being an obsession, I gave up the attempt to master these operations. Later, gradually, I learnt that there are many tricks which require no sleight-of-hand, and that the card conjurer's greatest asset is in

reality *bluff*; and, later still, having become very much more familiar with my materials, I found that sleight-of-hand was not so very difficult after all.

I venture to believe that many have undergone my first experience; and this booklet is designed to provide guidance for those who are not prepared to spend hours in practice before any material results appear, but who nevertheless would like to be able to entertain a friend or two upon occasion. To these my advice is, confine your first efforts to the comparatively simple tricks which require no sleight-of-hand; accustom yourself to bluffing through all *contre-temps*, and to nonchalant easy "patter." You will find that the simplicity of a trick bears no relation to its effectiveness—the simplest often produces greater wonderment than the most complicated. After a novitiate of this kind you will be able to tackle genuine sleight-of-hand with every prospect of success. And so to my subject.

C. R.

# TRICKS WITH CARDS

## CHAPTER I

### EFFECTIVE TRICKS WHICH REQUIRE NO SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

THESE tricks may be performed with any ordinary pack of cards. But if you are desirous of ultimately acquiring skill in sleight-of-hand, it is best to make it a rule to use a pack smaller than the ordinary English pack. The Continental kind are the most useful size; failing these, an American pack (these are usually slightly smaller than the English) will do. A "stripped" or "picquet" pack (i.e., with the twos, threes, fours, fives, and sixes removed) is the handiest to work with.

As an elementary exercise, practise the following

Take the pack in both hands, as shown in Fig. 1, and secretly draw down the bottom card. The suit and value of this card you may easily know by having glanced at it during your opening "patter" with reference to the trick.

Then, with the backs of the cards towards your audience (real or imaginary, for the purpose of this exercise), draw the top cards back in a series of steps. Ask the audience to stop you at any particular place. When so stopped, draw off completely the cards you have pulled back, and *with them the bottom card*, already known to you. This card will appear to be the one at which you were requested to stop, and, holding its face towards the audience, you should ask them to note what it is.

So far, you will say, there is nothing in it. True, this simple process will impress but few if you let it remain at that. But now you have "forced" the card (for that is what you have really done) you must proceed to make your audience forget all about your method of doing it. Act as though this is a mere preliminary to the trick.

Request several persons to shuffle the pack, and so on. Then deal out the cards face upwards in rows on the table, as though in accordance with some system, noting where the forced card falls. Collect the pack, picking them up so that the forced card is on top, back upwards. This you may easily do without attracting attention if you but act carelessly and converse the while.

Now take the pack firmly in the right hand between fingers and thumb, as shown in Fig. 2, having previously

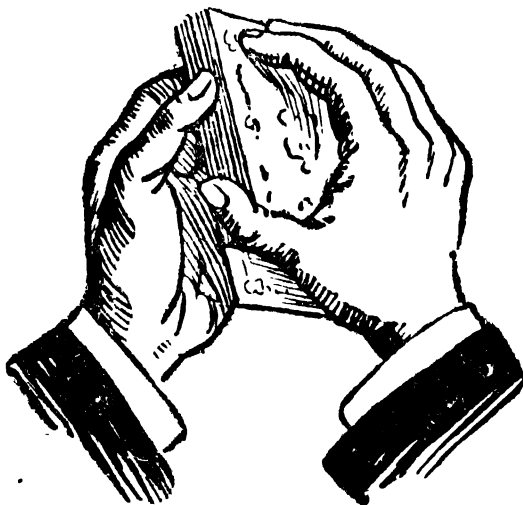


FIG. 1.

moistened the fingers, but *not* the thumb. Announce to your audience that you will now produce the chosen card, which you have found by means of your secret mathematical system, and which, you remind them, you did not see when it was chosen and noted. Gripping the pack firmly in the manner indicated, and holding the face of the bottom card towards the audience, give the whole a sharp downward jerk sufficient to cause it to fly out of your hand. All the cards will fall to the ground with the exception of the last, which will be retained by your moistened fingers and your thumb, which will close down on it.

Unless your audience have had much previous experience, they will be greatly impressed by seeing the card which they noted suddenly staring them in the face, after having been shuffled so well by themselves.

The reader should note here of what the trick really consists. It rests simply on the "forcing" of a card by a method which a child could employ, on a considerable amount of camouflage and "patter," and on an effective finish—the last so simple that you will find that you can do it at the first attempt. The camouflage is really the most important item. It need not necessarily be that which has been described. It may be anything, provided that it distracts the attention of the audience; and anyone

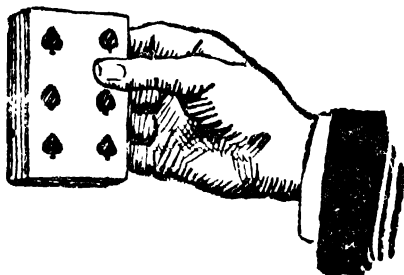


FIG. 2.

of average intelligence will be able to think out some apparently complicated performance which will effectively do this. But it should, perhaps, be emphasized here that "patter," although easy, must not be regarded lightly. As stated before, it is really the conjurer's most important stock-in-trade, and a little space devoted to it at this juncture will not come amiss.

"Patter" is a bad name for it. The word suggests the idea of a chattering volubility which is neither necessary nor desirable. Many of the most accomplished wizards of the cards use but a phrase here and there, spoken extremely casually.

Your guiding principles should be these: whatever may be the real secret of your trick, from *that* you must divert your audience's attention. When, for instance, you are

manipulating the cards in any way, *never look at them*. You will be surprised to find how easily you can direct the gaze of the onlookers by simply looking in some particular direction yourself. Further, whenever the trick depends upon some arithmetical calculation, use all your art to lead the audience into thinking that the secret lies in your manipulation of the cards; and whenever this latter is the real secret of the trick, throw out suggestions that you do it by means of some mysterious calculation.

Throughout you should remain easy and nonchalant; if by some mischance a trick goes wrong, betray not the slightest annoyance; try, rather, to act as though you had intended it that way. Remember that your conversation should *not* pour out in a ceaseless stream; for, if it does, it will soon pass as unnoticed as the ticking of a clock. Speak slowly—very slowly—and you will have your audience hanging on your words and watching your lips, which are quite safe things for them to watch. The best moment for performing any little piece of manipulation (such as putting the bottom card on top of the pack, etc.) is the moment when you are asking someone a question and nearly all eyes are turned towards him.

Above all, always think out the tale you are going to tell before you attempt any new trick. The tale may be improved, probably will be, at subsequent performances; for experience will rapidly show, far better than any printed instructions, the best method of “keeping them guessing.”

Due stress having been laid upon the importance and simplicity of camouflage, we may now proceed to further exercises; but first please note that when the expressions “top” and “bottom” of the pack are used, they refer to the top and bottom of the pack when lying *backs uppermost* on the table. Similarly with “top card” and “bottom card.”

### *Finding a Chosen Card.*

The elementary trick already described indicates one method of knowing the suit and value of a card “chosen” by the audience. Here are some others:

1. Take any odd number of cards which is a multiple of three (e.g., nine, fifteen, twenty-one, twenty-seven). Deal them face upwards in three heaps, asking a spectator to note one card, and to tell you in which heap it is. Pick up the heaps, with the indicated heap between the other two, and repeat the process *twice*. When the spectator points to a heap for the third time, you may know that his chosen card is the middle one of the heap—that is, if each heap contains five cards, it will be the third; if seven, the fourth, and so on. If you do not know this little trick, try it and see why it should be so.

2. Take twenty-five cards or so (any number will do) and deal them face upwards on the table, noting carefully the *first* card that falls. Ask someone standing by, before you do this, to note one of the cards and to remember at what number it falls.

Now proceed quietly to dispel from the onlookers' minds any suspicion that the trick, whatever it may be, is done by calculation. To "prove" this, take some more cards, very obviously at random, from what is left of the pack, and place them on top of the cards used. Allow the pack to be cut three or four or more times, but not shuffled. After all this camouflage, ask the bystander what number his card was in the original dealing process. On learning it, go rapidly through the pack and commence counting silently when you come to the card which you noted was the first card dealt at the beginning of the trick. Supposing the number given to you was, say, "the eleventh;" then the eleventh card onwards will be the "chosen" card. (If the cards are exhausted before you come to the number named, simply turn the pack over and carry on counting from the top.)

These methods of discovering a card should be regarded more as beginnings for tricks than as tricks in themselves, although they are quite effective if performed simply as described above.

Having learnt some methods of discovering "chosen" cards, practise now these further methods of dramatically revealing the card when found.



*Revealing a Discovered Card.*

1. Get the card on the top of the pack. Whilst talking, with the pack held between fingers and thumb by the shorter edges of the cards, gently push the top card (with the thumb of the other hand) a little way off the pack, so that its long edge projects about three-quarters of an inch from the other cards. This should be done in such a manner that the projecting edge is hidden under the palm of the hand which holds the pack.

Hold the cards about two feet above table or floor, and release your grip smartly, letting the whole pack fall. The rush of air, acting on the projecting edge of the top card,

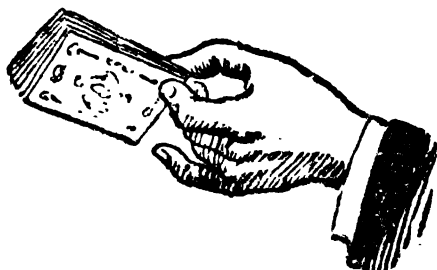


FIG. 3.

will cause it to turn over and lie face upwards on the top of the pack. Five minutes' practice will enable you to obtain the desired result every time.

2. Get your card, as before, on top of the pack. Previously moistening the fingers (not thumb), hold the pack towards the audience bottom card upwards, gripped between fingers and thumb by one corner, as in Fig. 3; ask someone to knock the pack downwards out of your hand. All the cards will fall with the exception of the undermost, which remains between your moistened fingers and thumb, staring your temporary assistant in the face.

3. Take the "discovered" card, with seven others, and lay them face downwards on the table. Ask someone to indicate any four of them. Now remove those cards, *whether indicated or not*, which do *not* contain the card you

are to "reveal." Repeat the process, getting someone to choose two of the remaining four cards, and removing the cards *you* do not want as before. With the last two cards go through the business again, returning the unwanted card to the pack. One card, face downwards, remains on the

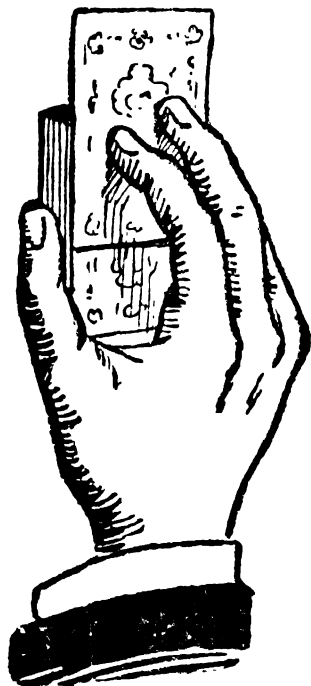


FIG. 4.

table; ask the original "chooser" of the card what his card was, and then turn it up.

This last is a very effective finish. You should "patter" to the effect that the audience *themselves* have chosen which cards you should return to the pack. Of course, they have not; but if you are lucky, the cards indicated may have contained on each occasion the card to be revealed; and even if you have been forced to remove the indicated cards in one instance, and in another to leave them on the table,

there is little fear of this being noticed by an audience to which the simple deception is unknown. You should, of course, converse during the process, saying, "You choose those? Very well, that leaves me these," or, "Very good, then I will return these to the pack."

4. Having placed the card which is to be "revealed" on the top of the pack, you may cause it to rise up out of the pack apparently of its own accord in the following manner: Hold the pack so that the bottom card directly faces the audience. With the first and second fingers, as shown in Fig. 4, push the card upwards, working with the fingers in tiny alternate steps. When the top card is well up you can hold it in position with the first finger, and work up two or three more following cards, if so desired, with the second finger alone. To the audience each card appears to rise up out of the middle of the pack.

The reader should now have learnt three methods of beginning a trick, and five methods of "finishing." With a little ingenuity in the matter of the all-important camouflage, he should from these be able to work up several quite astonishing little performances.

There are many other kinds of tricks, however, which may be performed without sleight-of-hand, and they will now be dealt with specifically. First will be taken those which depend upon the prearrangement of the pack in a certain order. To remember the order of a whole pack might appear difficult, but it is quite simple with the aid of a "sequence system." There are several of these, but a description of one will suffice.

Memorize this little couplet:

Eight Kings threatened to save  
Ninety-five ladies for one sick Knave.

Upon examination you will find that this apparent nonsense suggests the cards eight, King, three, ten, two, seven, nine, five, Queen, four, one, six, and Knave.

In this order, then, you must arrange the cards in every suit. But for the purpose of giving the cards a "mixed" appearance, it is necessary to have cards of different colours to follow one another. Hence the suits of the cards must

follow a definite order. It does not matter what this order is, provided that you remember it. As an example, you may decide that Diamonds, Clubs, Hearts, Spades shall be the order of the suits. Arrange the whole pack, then, so that the cards run in this order: *eight* of Diamonds, *King* of Clubs, *three* of Hearts, *ten* of Spades, *two* of Diamonds, *seven* of Clubs, and so on.

Some tricks which may be performed with such a prepared pack are as follows:

*To Name any Card Chosen by a Spectator without seeing it.*

Let the pack be cut by the audience two or three times. (This does not alter the sequence of the cards—i.e., the two of Diamonds will always be followed by the seven of Clubs, and so on—and the top card will always be the one following the bottom card in the sequence.) The pack, of course, must not be shuffled, but cutting is generally sufficient to assure the onlookers that the pack is not prepared.

Cut the pack or spread it fan-wise, and ask someone to draw a card, keep it hidden from you, and show it to the audience. Whilst he is doing this, glance quickly at the card next above the one drawn. You are then in a position to announce in any dramatic manner you choose what the card just drawn is.

*To Name any Chosen Card and any Number of Cards following it.*

Repeat the trick above described, but when the card has been withdrawn, place all the cards which were above it on the bottom of the pack. Name the card as before, and then casually announce that not only do you know that card, but also this, and this, and this, naming all the cards from the top of the pack right through to the end if necessary.

*A Pack being Cut into Two Portions, to Tell whether the Number of Cards in Each Portion is Odd or Even.*

Take your prepared pack, and have it cut by a spectator and the two portions placed side by side. During some suitable camouflage, such as pretending to weigh the cards in your hands, note the bottom cards of each portion. If they are of the same colour, the cards in each portion are even in number; if of different colours, the numbers are odd.

Many variations of the above tricks may be improvised, but it is best to perform only one or two of the kind, as before long your audience will require to see the pack really shuffled. And note that unless these form your opening tricks you will have to arrange for the secret substitution of the prepared pack (with identical backs, of course) for the pack you have hitherto been using.

The following miscellaneous tricks are all easy to perform, yet nevertheless mystifying to the uninitiated:

*To Place Four Kings in Different Parts of the Pack and bring them together by a Single Cut.*

Take four Kings and exhibit them fan-wise to your audience. But place neatly behind the *second* King (i.e., between the top two cards when the fan is closed) two other cards, preferably court cards, so that they cannot be seen. When the audience have seen the Kings, fold them together and place them quite openly on the top of the pack. Now take up the top card, which, being really a King, you may "accidentally" let the audience see, and place it at the bottom of the pack. Continuing your conversation, call your audience's attention to the fact that the next "King" (which they must *not* be allowed to see, since it is not a King) is placed in the pack a little below the middle. Similarly with the next "King," which is inserted in the pack a little higher up. Finally, take the fourth card, which is a King, and, after exhibiting it carelessly, replace it on the top of the pack. In reality, you now have three Kings on the top of the pack and one at the bottom.

emphasizing the fact that the audience actually saw the four Kings separated as widely as possible, cut the pack; and after "ruffling" the cards and ejaculating "Presto!" or some other magic word, let the audience examine the pack and find to their surprise the four Kings all together in the middle.

(*Ruffling*, it should be explained, is simply the production of a short crackling sound by holding the pack firmly in one hand whilst the edges of the cards are slightly bent back, and then allowed to escape, by the fingers or thumb of the other hand.)

This trick, again, may be varied. You may, by placing three other cards neatly behind the hindermost King of the four you exhibit, arrange it so that all four Kings are left at the top of the pack. Then, after executing a "false shuffle," you may offer the pack to be cut, and the Kings will be found all together as before.

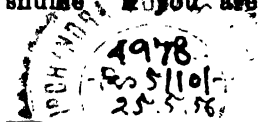
*The false shuffle*, although partaking in some little degree of the nature of sleight-of-hand, can be performed by almost anybody at the first attempt. It is a very useful bluff, and worth trying. You should take the pack in hand so that the cards whose position you do not wish to disturb are at the back. That is, if the cards in question are on the top of the pack, hold it face outwards; if they are at the bottom, hold it back outwards. Then by gripping this back portion firmly, and shuffling the front portion of the pack into the left hand in the usual manner, you will be able to produce the illusion of shuffling the whole pack. By "the usual manner" is meant the process of passing the cards in little groups of four or five into the left hand, the second group going in front of the first, the third behind it, the fourth in front, and so on. You may do this with all the cards right down to the last if you so desire, and this last card, or group of four or five cards, can be left in its original position at the back of the pack without any appearance of trickery.

*To Change Two Kings into Two Other Cards whilst they are held by Members of the Audience.*

After performing the above trick in one of its forms, you may say that perhaps the audience suspects you of palming the cards, etc. Whilst discoursing to this effect, prepare and exhibit the four Kings as if to do the trick again, but this time with *three* other cards behind the *second* King. Suggest, after carelessly exposing the first King and placing it at the bottom of the pack, that probably the audience would agree that the trick would be much more difficult if someone held the next "King," which you meanwhile take in your hand. They will agree, silently or otherwise, and you will then ask a spectator to come forward and place his hand firmly on the "King" which you have laid carefully face-downwards on the table. Impressively insist that this person must not move his hand on any pretext; this will prevent him examining the supposed King. Repeat this business with the third "King" and another onlooker. Then take the fourth "King," and, being careful not to expose it, place it in any part of the pack the audience may desire. Request one of the spectators engaged in holding down the two supposed Kings to cut the pack with his disengaged hand. After some mystic "passes" with your hands, or a magic word, announce that you have caused all the Kings to come together in the pack, and have substituted two other cards for the Kings held by Mr. — and Mr. —. (Name these cards if you have remembered them; it adds to the effect.) Finally, hand the pack to the audience for the discovery of the four Kings all together, and allow the other two cards to be examined.

*To "Vanish" a Card from the Pack, and make it Reappear in someone's Pocket.*

For this trick allow the audience to choose a card, and get it by any means you ~~know~~ to the top of the pack. Execute a "false shuffle" ~~if you are able~~ whilst talking



casually to your audience. Announce what you propose to do, meanwhile secretly moistening the back of one of your hands. Request a spectator to come forward and place his hands on the pack *thus*, suiting the action to the word, and placing your moistened hand on the pack as shown in Fig. 5. Suggest while you are doing this that the audience should come forward and watch closely. Be very particular that your temporary assistant should place his hands just exactly as you did. This will direct all eyes on his hands, and yours, with the top card sticking

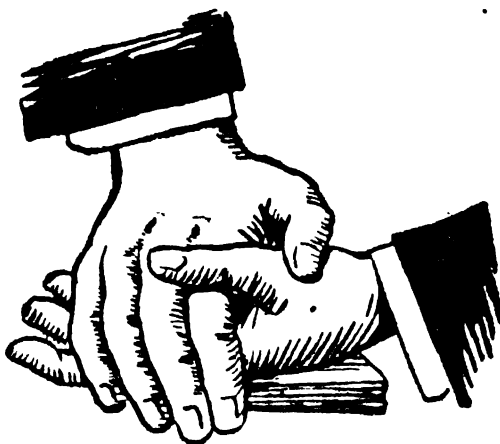


FIG. 5.

to the back of one of them, you can place carelessly behind you. Prolong the business of the exact position of your assistant's hands for a little while, whilst you find an opportunity to slip the card into some person's pocket. Then, after some further patter, reach out quickly to the cards, ruffle them smartly with your finger, and announce that the card has now disappeared from the pack. (The ruffle is useful here and in all similar tricks, as it almost invariably leads the audience to think that you have performed some wonderful sleight-of-hand at that particular moment.) Finally, ask the gentleman whose hands have been all the while on the cards to pass the pack round for examination;



and when the absence of the chosen card is verified, suggest that Mr. So-and-so should look in his pocket, where, to his amazement, the card will be found.

*To Name Cards Thought of by Four Different Persons.*

Allow the cards to be shuffled by the audience. Take four cards from the pack, and ask a bystander to choose and remember one of them, shuffle the four, and return them to you. Place them face downwards on the table, offer four more cards to another person with the same request. On receiving the second four again, place them on top of the first four. Repeat this with two more lots of four cards: When all sixteen cards have been returned, deal them into four heaps on the table. Ask the person to whom you first gave cards to tell you in which heap his card now is. Whichever heap he indicates, his card will be the uppermost of that heap. In the case of the second, third, and fourth persons, their cards will be the second, third, and fourth cards in whichever heaps they indicate. Even if two of them indicate the same heap, the rule still holds good.

This is a very mystifying little trick, and is very effective even if you simply announce each card in turn. But it may be made more effective by dealing out the cards again in some order enabling you to pick up the whole sixteen so that the chosen cards are on the top of the pack, in order. Then, by means of the "finish" described on p. 11, you may reveal the cards one by one by throwing the whole pack downwards into the left hand four times, each time retaining the hindmost card by means of your moistened fingers.

*To Name Several Groups of Three Cards Thought of by Several Persons.*

Lay out on the table eight groups of three cards, and invite three or four or more bystanders to note any particular group and remember it. Now pick up the cards haphazard, but keep each group together. Next, you

have to lay them out in accordance with a simple system, which consists in visualizing on the table before you the following words:

P A N A M A  
N O T O M O  
P I T I M I  
P E T E N E

If you examine this quaint arrangement of letters you will see that it is formed of eight letters only, each letter appearing three times. Having got this so well in your mind that you can almost see the letters printed on your table, the rest is easy enough. Take the cards as you have collected them, and deal the first three on the spaces where you are imagining that the three A's in Panama are printed. The next three place on the spots where you imagine the three O's to be. Similarly the next two groups of three go on the I's and E's. Covering the remaining imaginary letters is slightly more difficult, but quite simple after a little practice. What you have to remember is that each card of a group of three must be placed on the same imaginary letter.

When all the cards are placed out, you have only to ask each onlooker who chose a group to tell you in which row or rows his cards now are, and you will be able to tell him his three cards at once. Thus, supposing one of them says, "The first, third, and fourth rows," the only letter you will find represented in all of these rows is P, so you indicate the cards occupying the places of the imaginary P's. Similarly, if the onlooker says, "All in the second row," you know at once that his cards must be the ones covering the imaginary O's.

A little practice will make you perfect in this trick, and its secret is practically undiscoverable. A variation, in which you lay the cards out, in the first instance, in twos instead of in groups of three, may be performed by using the Latin phrase, *Mutus dedit nomen Coci*, which, being translated, means that one Mutus gave a name to the Coci, who were a race of barbarians. The four words of the

phrase are used instead of the nonsensical words given above, and it will be seen that this time there are eight different letters, each appearing *twice*. By laying the first pair of cards on the two imaginary M's, and so on, you can name any person's chosen pair after he has indicated the rows in which they lie. To some this method is easier to remember than that just described, although the former, since it enables you to name the cards in groups of three, is the more effective.

*Another System for Finding a Card "Thought of."*

Take twenty-five cards, and allow the audience to shuffle and cut them as they please. Then lay them out in five rows of five cards face upwards. Ask an onlooker to think of any one of the cards thus exposed, and tell you in which row it is. On being told, note the card at the left-hand end of that row. Next, take up the cards in the following manner: begin at the last (or right-hand) card of the bottom row, placing it on the face of the card immediately above it in the next row. Place these two cards on the card immediately above them in the next higher row, and so to the top. Repeat this in turn with each of the five vertical rows which your cards necessarily form if they are laid out neatly. The last card you pick up will be the left-hand card of the first or top horizontal row.

Now deal out the cards again in five horizontal rows as before. Ask the onlooker to tell you in which row his card appears this time. When he tells you, look along the top row for the card which you noted as being first in the row to which he pointed the first time. Immediately below it, in the row to which he now points, is the card of which he "thought."

This trick may be performed simply as described; but it is improved if the performer invents some further camouflage, and "reveals" the card "thought of" by one of the methods described on p. 14.

*To Tell which of Four Cards have been Turned Round during your Absence.\**

If you examine an ordinary pack of cards closely you will find that on some of the cards the small "pips" or suit marks are not placed equidistantly from the edge of the paste-board; the "pip" at one corner in some cases is twice as far from the edge as the "pip" at the other corner. Select four cards where you can detect this fairly easily, but beware, of course, of choosing any cards where it is too obvious. Lay the cards on the table with all the close-to-the-edge "pips" at the top. If, when you return after a short absence, one or more of the cards has been turned round, you will be able to detect it at once.

This is very simple when you know the secret, but the audience generally takes some time to discover exactly what it is.

*The Inseparable Families : a Method of Arranging Cards in Groups so that they cannot be Separated.*

Take the King, Queen, and Jack of each suit. Lay them out in three rows of four cards with every appearance of carelessness, but in accordance with the following rules:

The first row must be all of different suits; the second row must commence with a card similar in suit to the last card of the first row, and the following three cards must be respectively of the same suits as the first three cards in the first row; the third row is arranged exactly as the second in principle, referring, however, to that row immediately above it as to the suits of the cards. As an example, observe the following:

Diamond	Club	Heart	Spade
Spade	Diamond	Club	Heart
Heart	Spade	Diamond	Club

Having laid out the cards in this manner, pick them up again, after some suitable patter, in vertical rows, beginning with the bottom card of the right-hand vertical row (as

described for the preceding trick but one). If the cards are now dealt out into four heaps, the King, Queen, and Jack of each suit will always be found together in one heap, no matter how many times the cards may have been cut in the meanwhile. You should, of course, make a point of allowing the cards to be cut (not shuffled) after you have picked them up.

If one of your audience says he can see how it is done, try the following variation on him: Add the four Aces to the cards already used, and lay them all out on this system. Place five cards in the first row, making the cards at each end of the row of the same suit. Commence the second row with a card of the same suit as the *fourth* card in the first row; the second, third, fourth, and fifth cards of the row must be of the same suits respectively as the first, second, third, and fourth cards of the first row. Similarly with the third row, referring, of course, to the second row as to the suit of the cards. The odd card you have left you should place by itself below all the others. Here is an example:

Spade	Diamond	Heart	Club	Spade
Club	Spade	Diamond	Heart	Club
Heart	Club	Spade	Diamond	Club
		Diamond		

Pick the cards up, beginning with the odd card, and carrying on from the last card of the bottom row as before. If dealt out into four heaps, after any amount of cutting, the Ace, King, Queen, and Jack of one and the same suit will be found in each heap.

### *To Name Four Cards Cut by a Member of the Audience.*

This is an especially good trick, and depends primarily on getting sight of the top card. It must be carried out rapidly and without hesitation, however, as success depends absolutely on bluff.

Offer the pack to be shuffled by the audience; take it back after this has been done, and whilst pattering contrive

to find out what is the top card. Next ask a member of the audience to cut the pack three times, so as to leave four packets in a row on the table. The last packet he puts down will have as its top card the top card of the pack, which you know, we will suppose, to be the Queen of Hearts.

Now, placing your hand on the top card of the packet *farthest* from that on which is the Queen of Hearts, you announce boldly, "This is the Queen of Hearts." You pick it up, *but do not show it to the audience*. Instead you quickly note what it is, and immediately announce it as the top card of the next packet, which card you thereupon pick up. You repeat this bluff with the remaining two top cards, allowing no pause. As you pick the cards up you arrange them fan-wise in your left hand, taking care that the last card picked up (the Queen of Hearts) is placed as the first card of the fan.

Then you turn them all towards the audience, and they find that the four cards you have named are actually in your hand. They will invariably attribute the trick to some marvellous sleight on your part.

Bear in mind, however, that success depends on easy rapidity and colossal impudence. A first effort, perhaps, should be confined to two or at most three cards.

As a conclusion to this chapter of easily performed tricks, here are two additional endings which you may like to try for variety's sake. They are applicable to any trick where you wish to reveal some particular card or cards.

### *Finding a Card by Touch while the Pack is Hidden in a Person's Pocket.*

Having discovered a card "chosen" or "thought of," you place it secretly, by any method known to you, on the top of the pack. Then, requesting a gentleman to assist you, you place the whole pack in his inside breast pocket. After some patter to the effect that the pack is secure from your sight in total darkness inside this gentleman's pocket, you proceed to find it by "touch"—simply by inserting your hand in the pocket and withdrawing the top card

You must, of course, remember which is the top of the pack as it lies in the pocket.

A very startling variation of this may be attempted as an experiment. Place the cards in your friend's pocket as before, and then proceed to patter on the possibilities of thought-transference and the like. Ask your friend to do his best to help you, as this is only an experiment; get his assurance that at least he will not attempt to spoil your trick. Then, grasping him by the hand, look into his eyes with becoming seriousness, and request him, when you release his hand, to put it into the pocket and bring out a card *as quickly as possible* ("before the thought-influence wears off").

He will probably obey you in all good faith, and it is an even chance that he will draw out the top card, which will probably be the first on which his fingers alight. He may, of course, bring the card from the other end of the pack, and if you wish to make doubly sure of success, you had best make this an ending for a trick where *two* cards are to be revealed. These cards should be secretly placed one at each end of the pack, and if you have sufficiently impressed your victim with the necessity for rapidity, he is practically bound to bring out one or the other. The one that remains you can yourself "pick" from his pocket as above described.

### *To Catch a Card (or Two Cards) from a Shower of Cards.*

Place the card to be revealed at the top of the pack. If two cards, place one at each end of the pack. Draw the card or cards to be revealed a little way off the remainder. Hold the pack between fingers and thumb, having previously moistened the fingers (if one card) or fingers and thumb (if two cards); flick the pack upwards, causing all the cards, excepting those retained by the moistened fingers and thumb, to fly into the air in a shower. The eyes of your audience will be on the cards in the air; your hand, holding the retained card or cards, should be lowered momentarily behind the table or behind your leg. (You

should stand "sideways" to the audience if you are not behind a table.) Then, as the cards are "fluttering down, thrust your hand quickly amongst them; as they fall to the ground your hand remains holding up the card or cards to be revealed, and it will really look as though you had caught them in mid-air.

This somewhat spectacular effect cannot be obtained without some little practice, but it is not by any means difficult; you have only to experiment a few times to learn just how high and how widely to throw the "shower."

Finally, a word must be added with reference to "getting the card on the top of the pack." The reader ere this has perhaps said to himself: "Ah, there's the rub!" True, it is much easier to say than to do. But it is not half so difficult as might be expected, even for a complete novice. The previously suggested method of laying out the cards apparently haphazard and picking them up with every appearance of carelessness will rarely cause comment. The great thing is to keep the minds of the audience occupied whilst you are doing this sort of thing. For this nothing is so efficacious as a perfectly self-possessed and casual conversational manner. A stock of good stories should form part of your repertoire; no "patter" is successful that does not include several of these—fairly short ones, necessarily. They can be obtained simply enough from one of the numerous little books of humorous anecdotes, which are sold extremely cheaply, and are entertainments in themselves. Nevertheless, should there be any who find that getting the card to the top of the pack is difficult, they need not despair; prepared cards, dealt with in the next chapter, will obviate even this small trouble.



## CHAPTER II

### TRICKS THAT CAN BE PERFORMED BY A NOVICE WITH THE AID OF SPECIALLY PREPARED CARDS

ARMED with three or four of the specially prepared conjurer's packs of cards, the novice need have no fear as to his being able to give a really excellent performance. If he has had a little experience with the tricks described in the preceding chapter, he will have acquired an ample sufficiency of the *sang-froid* necessary for carrying out the substitution of faked packs for genuine packs, this being the only part of his procedure that will need to be disguised. Except in a few instances, it is necessary that the performer should work from a table at least two or three yards distant from his audience.

Of prepared packs, the most useful and readily obtained are the "forcing" pack and the *biseauté* pack.

The *forcing pack* consists either of the same card repeated throughout, or of two or three cards repeated many times. With the first type you will immediately see that a spectator, choosing wherever he wishes, is bound to choose a certain card. With the second type, either one spectator may be forced to choose the two or three particular cards, or three spectators each made to choose one of the two or three particular cards. The methods of procedure are as follows:

1. Arrange the forcing pack so that the identical cards are all together in groups. For instance, suppose your pack consists of ten twos of Diamonds, ten eights of Hearts, and twelve Aces of Clubs. Have all the first named on top of the pack, followed in turn by all the eights of Hearts and all the Aces of Clubs. Pass amongst your audience, spreading out fan-wise eight or nine cards from the top of the pack, and ask someone to choose a card from among

them. When this has been done, pass to another person and spread out some cards in the middle of the pack. This person will readily enough choose one of the cards which you offer. Repeat the process with a third person and some cards from the bottom of the pack. To all appearances a perfectly free choice has been given, and generally no trouble will arise. But if you have an audience that may contain persons disposed to trip you up, the different groups of cards should be separated by "long" or "wide" cards (of which more anon) in order that you may guard against accidentally allowing two identical cards to be drawn.

2. Arrange the forcing pack so that the two or three cards run alternately throughout. You may allow it to be cut any number of times without disturbing the order; and you should finally ask someone to cut the pack, take off the three top cards, and make a note of them.

The *biseauté* pack contains the ordinary number of different cards, but every card is cut so that one end is narrower than the other. When all the narrow ends are together the pack is practically indistinguishable from an ordinary pack. If, however, one of the cards is turned round, it can be quite easily distinguished from the rest by touch, for its wider end, being amongst the narrow ends of the remainder, projects appreciably.

Thus it will be seen that the pack may be freely shuffled by the audience, a card chosen from any part of it, replaced, and discovered immediately by the performer, provided only that he turns the pack round before the card is replaced! To do this does not require a very great amount of skill. The best procedure is thus: if you yourself expose and replace the card, you will see that by passing it from one hand to the other the "turning" can be easily effected. If, however, you offer the cards in a "fan" for a spectator to choose one, close the fan whilst he is examining it (you can distract his attention by asking him to show the card to a neighbour), and open it again with the other end outwards when he comes to replace his card. You must, however, watch carefully to see if he turns the card round whilst holding it, and if he does you must act accordingly.

It is possible, by arranging all court cards (or all the cards of one suit) on one way, and the remainder the other way, for the performer to separate all the court cards (or all the Hearts, as the case may be) from the pack at a single stroke. This is done by gripping the pack by its edge with fingers and thumb at each end and drawing the hands smartly apart. This feat, however, tends to give the secret away.

An ordinary pack may be rendered almost as effective as a *biseauté* pack in the following manner:

Take a new pack, square it up neatly, and clamp it firmly between two boards with one corner projecting. With some fine glass-paper smooth off about one-sixteenth or one-eighth of an inch of this projecting corner, taking care to preserve its roundness.

The projecting corner of any "turned" card in this pack may be easily distinguished with the tip of the finger.

*Long* and *wide* cards are simply cards about one-sixteenth of an inch longer or wider than an ordinary card. They are obtainable in packs ("longs and shorts," they are generally called), and one or more from one of these packs can be used with an ordinary pack as occasion demands.

(It should hardly be necessary to mention that when you are using prepared cards, all your packs, faked and otherwise, should have identical backs.)

A wide card may be shuffled with an ordinary pack with no fear of its being lost. It may be found at a moment's notice simply by feeling for it and cutting the pack. It will be found also that a card placed beneath a "wide card" is so shielded by its extra width that ordinary shuffling will rarely separate them. From this fact the finding of a chosen card may be performed in the following manner: Offer the pack to be shuffled. On receiving it back, allow a card to be chosen at random. Then cut at the wide card, and have the chosen card replaced beneath it. After further shuffling, cut again at the long card, and boldly state that the one beneath it is the chosen one. It generally, almost invariably, will be; but the cards *may* get separated, in which case you will have to make some comic explanation.

A far better plan is to have a "wide" pack, and to allow the card to be chosen from this. Whilst it is in the hands of the audience, substitute an ordinary pack and have the card replaced therein. No amount of shuffling can now prevent your discovering the card when you wish. You may "cut" it whilst blindfold, or discover it by "feel" whilst the pack is hidden in someone's pocket, or in various other ways that will occur to you.

The reader will no doubt have realized by this time that almost all the tricks centring upon cards "chosen" or "thought of," which have been described in the preceding chapter, can be performed with certainty and ease by the novice armed with a little experience in camouflage and three or four prepared packs.

By placing a "chosen" card beneath a wide card, cutting, and placing the lower half of the pack on top, the difficulty of "getting a card to the top" is overcome. By forcing a known card from a "forcing pack," and having ready another pack with that card already on the top, the task is made even simpler. It is, in fact, self-evident that with a large number of duplicate cards the opportunities for deception are almost unlimited. Time would be wasted in describing how the tricks already dealt with should be varied for use with prepared cards; the variations will suggest themselves. On the substitution of one pack for another, however, a few words of guidance may be advantageous.

As mentioned above, you should work from a table six or eight feet distant from your audience. Your outfit of cards may consist of, say, one forcing pack, one *biseauté* pack, one "wide" pack, and three ordinary packs. If you cannot arrange a shelf at the back of your table, slightly lower than its top, on which to place your alternative packs, you should have a book or two, or any odd article, such as a cribbage or bridge box, behind which to place them; you will be astonished how little cover is required to hide two or three packs of cards.

By dropping your hand quite casually behind the edge of the table, or whatever article you are using for cover,

you will find that it is quite simple to change one pack for another without arousing any suspicion. As an alternative method you may, if your waistcoat pockets are deep enough, carry a pack or two in these, and effect a substitution whilst half-turned away from the audience, or when walking back to your table after having been amongst them. This last method is perhaps the easiest of all.

But the reader who wishes to give a long and varied performance should not hesitate to purchase a proper conjurer's table with *servante* and *profonde* complete. The *servante* is the small shelf previously referred to, and the *profonde* is an open-mouthed bag into which packs dispensed with can be noiselessly dropped.

Here are some additional tricks which may be performed with the aid of prepared and duplicate packs:

### *The Torn Card Trick.*

Take a card from an ordinary pack and offer the remainder to be shuffled. The card abstracted should be the same as that of which your forcing pack consists. Whilst the shuffling is going on—or beforehand if you wish—you should tear a corner from the abstracted card, retaining the corner in your hand, and laying the mutilated card in some inconspicuous position on the table. Now take the pack from the person who has been shuffling, walk towards another person or your table, and substitute the forcing pack. Allow a card to be "chosen" from this. Request the chooser to tear it into pieces—say about sixteen (this precaution is necessary, or he may tear it into very minute fragments). Whilst the tearing is taking place, get rid of the forcing pack and lay the original ordinary pack on top of the card from which you have torn the corner. Now ask the spectator to hand you the fragments, with which you proceed to walk towards your table. Pausing, however, as if by after-thought, you say, "You had better keep one piece for identification," and you hand him the corner of the card *which you yourself have torn*. Then with great solemnity perform some business such as burning the frag-

ments separately, or all in a heap in an ash tray. Or you may ask another onlooker to do this. Take the ashes and dispose of them in any manner you choose (if you wish to be very effective, pour them into the barrel of a small pistol, and then fire it at the pack lying on the table). Pick up the pack, shuffle it a little to get the torn card into the middle, and then (after executing a "ruffle" if you have not made use of the pistol business) hand it round for the torn card to be discovered. Upon its discovery, request the person holding the torn-off corner to see if it fits; it will do so exactly, of course, much to the bewilderment of the audience.

*The Attractive Powers of Money : a Trick with Biseauté Cards.*

This trick was invented by Professor Hoffman, and is very effective, it is only possible with a *biseauté* or "cornered" pack.

Spread the *biseauté* pack (all narrow ends together, of course) in an overlapping line on the table backs upward. Ask a spectator to place coins against any three of the cards. When this has been done, "show" the selected three cards by turning them over *lengthways* to show their faces, and *sideways* to replace them in their original positions. This process you will find reverses them in relation to the remainder of the pack. Now ask a spectator to pick up the cards and shuffle them thoroughly. If he does this by any ordinary method, there is no fear of any of the cards being reversed. Upon receiving the pack from him, cut it at one of the "reversed" cards, and place the lower half of the pack on top. This you should do unobtrusively and casually, as if by force of habit. One of the "reversed" cards will now be at the bottom of the pack. The three coins are still lying on the table; place the pack on the middle one, and announce that you will cut the pack into three portions, one for each coin. Cut the first time at the uppermost "reversed" card, and place the cut portion on the right-hand coin; cut again at the next lower "reversed" card, and place the cut portion on the left-hand coin; leave

the remainder of the cards as they are on the middle coin. You will have seen, of course, that this process brings a "reversed card" immediately on top of each of the three coins. After a little suitable patter about the cards passing through the pack and each getting as close as possible to its own coin, you allow the packets to be turned over for the audience to see that you have been telling the truth.

With *biscauté* cards you may also perform an additional form of "ending." It is simple, but quite worth using occasionally. Having allowed a card to be chosen in some way and replaced (reversed, of course) in the pack, you allow it to be shuffled, and then hold it in the air by its narrow end between your finger and thumb. Request somebody to count "One, two, three!" or to say "Go!" at which signal you drop all the cards, excepting the "reversed" card, whose wider end will enable you easily to retain it.

*Any Number of Kings : a Finale with the "Forcing" Pack.*

If you have a "forcing" pack consisting entirely of Kings of the four suits (or any other cards, for that matter), you may add a bewildering finale to your "tricks with prepared packs" in the following manner: Let us suppose you have just performed one of the tricks wherein you have brought all your Kings together in the middle of the pack. After showing them, you should replace them amongst the other Kings in the "forcing" pack (secretly substituted for the ordinary pack), and say, "I will now place your Kings in the pack and shuffle it well," doing so meanwhile. "Now, sir, at what number would you like them to appear?" The answer being forthcoming, you count through the pack and produce one King at the required number. Then you say, "Oh, by the way, how many did you want to appear at this number?" Immediately the answer will be at the least, "Four." Generally a wag will say, "Five." To this you should reply, "Well, that is rather a lot, considering there are only four in the whole pack. Here are the four, you see. You ought not to expect more, but since

you ask I will do my best to find an extra one. Here we are—another King of Diamonds! Would you like any more? I've got plenty, you see, now! Six, seven, eight, nine! Any more? You seem to like lots of Kings—try these!" And you throw him a dozen or so face upwards. The wag's discomfiture is generally complete.

This trick can be adapted to follow almost any one of those already described; the only skill required is in substituting the "forcing" pack for the ordinary pack, which the audience have previously examined.

There are, besides the prepared packs which have been

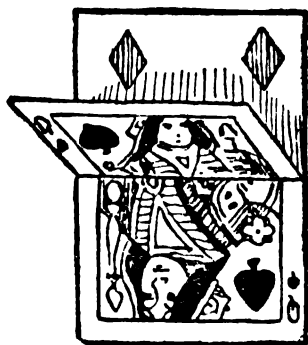


FIG. 6.

mentioned, various kinds of single trick-cards. With these you can perform astonishing feats, provided that you are a sufficient distance from your audience. The commonest type, perhaps, is the "changing" card (Fig. 6), which has a flap hinged to its middle, and which can be made to appear as either of two totally different cards, according to the way the flap is folded. The flap is generally kept in one position by a small rubber spring, and in showing it in the other position you have to retain the flap with your finger. The merest wave of your hand is sufficient to cover the movement of the flap.

Another common type is the card designed so that it has, when held one way up and masked by another card in a "fan," the appearance of, say, a "two." Held the other



way up it presents the appearance of a genuine "seven." Examples of such cards are shown in Fig. 7.

There are many other types. Their uses are easily comprehended, and then require very little skill in manipulation. Any conjurer's outfitter will supply them cheaply enough, and generally with full instructions for use. It should be

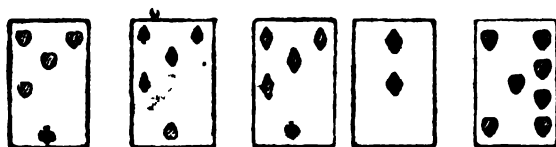


FIG. 7.

borne in mind, however, that in a drawing-room the close proximity of the audience renders them liable to detection.

It may perhaps be as well, however, to devote a little space to describing how the special cards in Fig. 7 are used. The first three may be used thus in conjunction with a genuine eight and an equally genuine two.

You should preface your trick by remarking that you will now show a little feat of "palming" with four eights

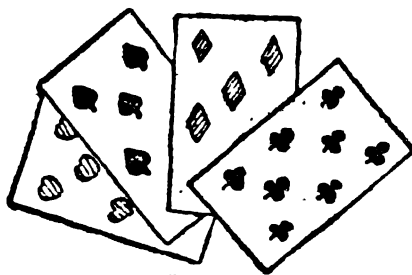


FIG. 8.

and a two. This lie will ensure that the audience, or the greater part of it, will pay more attention to your empty, unoccupied hand than to the exposed cards and your method of holding them. Display the cards first as in Fig. 8, the genuine eight only being fully exposed. Lay the special cards on the table, display the genuine eight,

and say, "I will now substitute the two for the eight," picking up and displaying the genuine two, and doing so. Now take up the three special cards, place them behind the two and display them, as in Fig. 9. The reversal of the special cards must be done neatly, the best procedure being as follows: Having displayed the cards in one position fan-wise in the left hand, close the fan, take the cards by the upper ends, and lay them face downwards on the table, retaining the genuine card in your hand. The lower ends will now be the farthest from you, and to pick the cards up again and display them in the second position you have

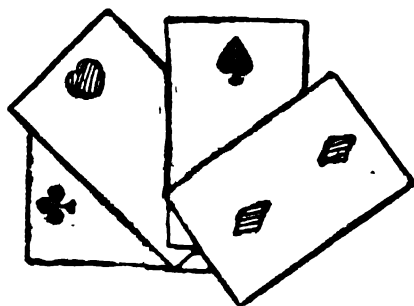


FIG. 9.

only to turn them over *sideways* and place them behind the genuine card which you already hold in your left hand.

The trick may be extended, further, to making all the cards appear as black cards, etc. This you may do by taking the supposed eight of Hearts and eight of Diamonds from the fan exhibited as in Fig. 8, and, after performing some business with them, such as rubbing on the coat sleeve, return them to the fan *the other way up*.

The other two special cards shown in Fig. 7 are made to change their appearance simply by holding in different positions, the first time covering with the fingers one of the spots (or two, as the case may be), and the second time covering with the fingers the blank space at the opposite side or opposite end of the card.

An excellent trick may be performed by gumming these two cards back to back, and showing the card thus faked,

first as the nine, secondly as the five, and then, by turning quickly to the opposite side of your audience and meanwhile reversing the card, as the three and Ace in turn. You must, of course, work this trick at some distance from your audience, holding the double card high in the air. Your movements and "patter" should be practised beforehand. The usual "patter" is to the effect that you "will remove any number of spots up to four from this nine of Hearts." Generally, one member of the audience at least will demand the full four. But supposing only two are demanded, you must get the required number by asking for "any further bids," or by adding, "two for myself." Similarly with the transformations from five to three and three to Ace.

## CHAPTER III

### SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

THE reader who has accustomed himself to performing the tricks already dealt with, and who has thereby gained experience in camouflaging his movements and real intentions, will find that he is so familiar with his cards that real feats of "prestidigitation" will come comparatively easily to him.

He should practise each of the following sleights in turn as described, making fairly sure of one before proceeding

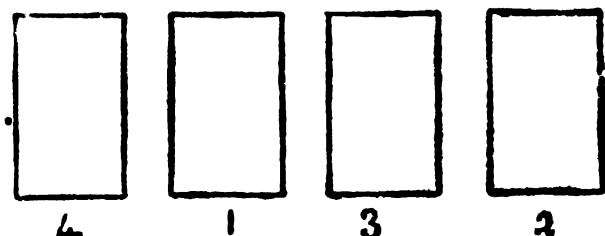


FIG. 10.

to the next. (Practice before a mirror is very valuable, and should be tried.) As he gains proficiency in each, he should make use of it for the improvement of the tricks he already knows.

*False shuffles* are of two kinds: one to keep the whole pack in some prearranged order, and the other merely to keep a certain card or cards in a particular position. Both kinds, of course, are intended to deceive the audience.

*First Method (for Prearranged Pack).*—Take the pack in the right hand and drop the cards in a succession of small packets (as is done for the game "banker") on the table. The position of the packets should be as in Fig. 10, that first dropped being at 1, and so on. Four packets are the

easiest number to commence with. Then rapidly pick up the cards with both hands alternately, thus: with the left hand place 4 on 3, and with the right hand place 2 on 1; leave 2 and 1 on the table, and place 4 and 3 on the top of them with the left hand. You will see that the cards are really in the same order as they were originally. After a little practice you will be able to perform this with six packets, or even more. Rapid and apparently careless

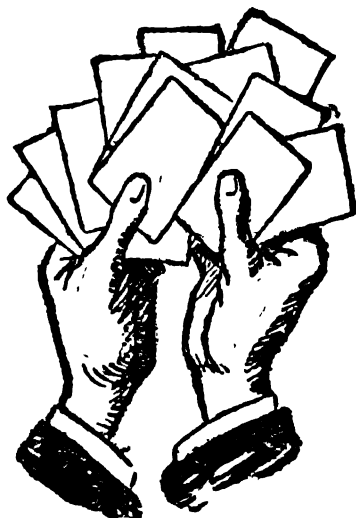


FIG. 11.

gathering up of the packets is required to obtain the effect of a thoroughly mixed pack.

*Second Method (with Prearranged Pack).*—Cut the pack and take the top half in the right hand. Spread each half in a fan as shown in Fig. 11, working the two fans in together, but allowing the cards in the right hand to project above the others. Then close the whole fan, and in squaring up the cards twist out the projecting cards with the right hand and place them on top as before.

*Third Method (with Prearranged Pack).*—Take the pack in the left hand, and slide off from the top four or five cards

into the right hand. Then slide off four or five more *under* the first lot. Next, *pretend* to slide off another group above the first lot, but in reality push the group back with your right thumb and place it underneath. Continue the movement to the end of the pack. The effect to the observer is that the groups are really placed alternately above and below. Many people shuffle in this rather clumsy manner, and the fact that the order of the cards is undisturbed will quite easily evade detection.



FIG. 12.

*Fourth Method (to Keep a Certain Card in View).*—Have the particular card at the top of the pack. Grip the pack in the left hand, as shown in Fig. 12, and lift out with the right hand the bulk of the middle cards. Pass these in small groups on to the face of the cards remaining in the left hand. This is a real shuffle for all the cards except the top one, which remains in position. Three or four cards, with a little care, can be kept in position in the same way.

*Fifth Method (to Keep a Certain Card or Cards in View).*—Have the card or cards on the bottom of the pack. Take the pack in the right hand, slide off the card or cards into the left hand, and then pass the remainder of the pack in

small groups, on to the face of the first one or ones. This brings the card, or cards to the top of the pack, and the shuffle described above may be performed, if necessary, in addition.

With the aid of one or other of these false shuffles the reader will see that many of the tricks already described (particularly those with the prearranged pack, or where you or your audience place a card on the top of the pack) may be considerably improved.

*The false cut* is useful, and soon acquired. It may be used either to "reveal" a card you have already placed at the bottom of the pack, or to force a person to "choose" one placed ready on the top of the pack.

Take the pack lengthways between the thumb and fingers of the left hand, holding it level, and with the long edges towards the audience. Next take hold, also lengthways, with the thumb and fingers of the right hand, but gripping only the lower half of the pack. Simply slide out the lower half *behind* the upper half, and draw the right hand quickly upwards. If performed rapidly enough, the cut appears perfectly normal and genuine.

*Palming* with cards is comparatively easy; the palmed card is simply clipped between the ball of the thumb and the top joints of the fingers. To get the card into position, hold the pack, with the card to be palmed on top, in the left hand, and cover it with the right lengthways. With the thumb of the left hand push the card about half or three-quarters of an inch off the pack, and then with the fingers of the left hand, which should be underneath and right round the pack, push the card upwards into the palm of the right hand. Bend the hand, and the card will remain out of sight as long as you keep your fingers close together knuckles uppermost. Do not be afraid of bending the card double if need be. It can be straightened immediately on being replaced in the pack by simply "ruffling." And do not attempt to hide the hand wherein the card is palmed. Hold the pack out to the audience with it, asking them to shuffle or cut the cards. If you are on a platform above the level of the audience, hold the cards as shown in Fig. 13. If you

are level with them, hold your hand the other way up. In both positions the palmed card is hidden from your audience but exposed to your own view, which last is useful.

In all tricks where the audience has chosen a card and you have got it on to the top of the pack the art of palming will be extremely useful. You will be able to allow the audience to shuffle the pack themselves, and to get sight of the card at the same time. After the shuffling take the cards back with the left hand, and place them on the palmed card in your right hand. In your first attempts you will find it simplest to do this by pretending to examine the pack held face upwards and fan-wise in both hands, saying,

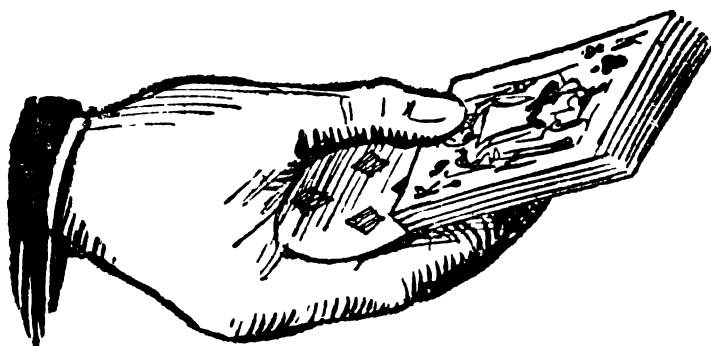


FIG. 13.

"Yes, they seem to be very well shuffled indeed." The act of closing the fan after this will disguise your action in placing the palmed card at the back of the pack.

*The change* is rather more difficult than palming, and requires practice. But it is very valuable, and quickness is the key to success.

*First Method.*—Hold the card to be "changed" between the first and second fingers of the right hand. Hold the pack in the left hand between thumb and first finger, with the card for which the first mentioned is to be changed on the top. Push this card slightly forward with the thumb. The pack should be so held that the second, third, and fourth fingers extend below it, leaving a little space between first and second fingers. To execute the "change" the



hands have to be brought together as in Fig. 14. This, of course, must be done in such a manner that the audience does not notice it. A good method is to cover the movement by a bigger movement, such as a sweep of both hands to the right or left; or to say, "Observe, ladies and gentlemen, that I do not put this card anywhere near the pack," meanwhile doing so and effecting the change! A keen watcher, of course, is bound to see the hands approach each other, but if it is done at all well he cannot possibly see the actual change. When the hands are brought together,

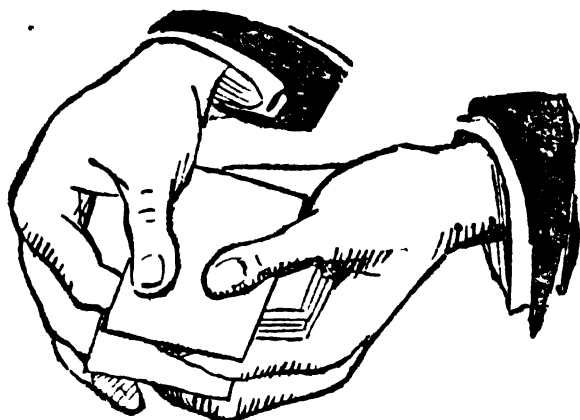


FIG. 14.

the card from the right hand passes between the first and second fingers of the left hand and underneath the pack, whilst the finger and thumb of the right hand grasp the projecting top card and carry it away.

*Second Method.*—This is designed to leave the changed card on the top of the pack so that the operation may be repeated. This time the pack, is held in the left hand with the top card pushed slightly forward as before, but the card to be changed is held in the right hand between the *finger and thumb*, and when the hands are brought together, the card from the right hand is pushed under the left thumb on top of the card for which it is to be changed, whilst this latter card is carried away between the first and second

fingers of right hand. Some exponents carry it away between finger and thumb, which is better, but more difficult; the feat is performed by holding *both* cards for an instant between finger and thumb, and pushing the top card forward with the thumb whilst drawing back the lower card with the finger.

It will be seen that ability to carry out the "change" is immensely valuable. A card just shown to the audience, or chosen by them, can be held up to view, then changed rapidly whilst "pattering," and the substituted card placed anywhere you or the audience may choose, the audience believing, of course, that it is still the same card. Almost all the tricks already described, excepting the calculation tricks, can be improved thus.

*The pass* is by far the most valuable accomplishment that a card conjurer can possess; unfortunately, it is also one of the most difficult.

The object of the operation is to transpose the position of the top and bottom halves of the pack. The advantage of such a manoeuvre will at once be seen; you cut the pack, and request a member of the audience to replace his chosen card between the two halves; then to *all appearances* you place the upper half on top of the card, and the audience is free of the suspicion that is sometimes aroused when the chosen card is placed merely on the top of the pack.

There is quite a considerable number of methods of performing the pass, but the amateur will be well advised to confine himself strictly to two of them; perfect execution of one method is infinitely preferable to a nodding acquaintance with several.

The value of using *small* cards will be brought home to you at this stage. The pass necessitates a fairly large movement, and as much of this as possible has to be hidden by the hands.

*First Method (with Both Hands).*—First of all practise the preliminary movement of inserting the little finger above the lower half of the pack (held in the left hand), as in Fig. 15, and of replacing the upper half-pack and squaring up the cards so that their outer edges (except at the corner where

your little finger is) present an unbroken appearance to the audience. This is not difficult, and only requires that

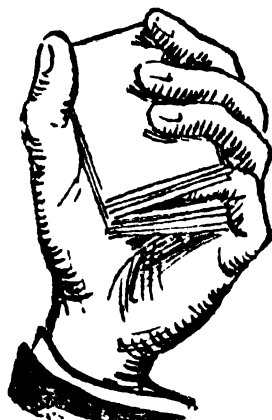


FIG. 15.

the left thumb be pressed firmly on the back of the pack.

Now cover the pack with the right hand, and take hold

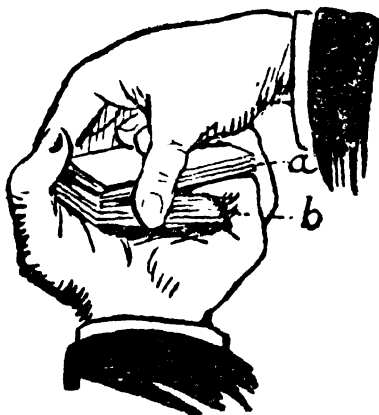


FIG. 16.

of the lower packet lengthways, as in Fig. 16; press the edge of the lower packet which is resting in the fork of the

left thumb still farther into the fork, at the same time allowing the thumb to give back a little.

Commence to raise the *opposite* edge of the packet, whilst with the fingers of the left hand you lift the upper packet, as shown in Fig. 17. When the inner edges of the two

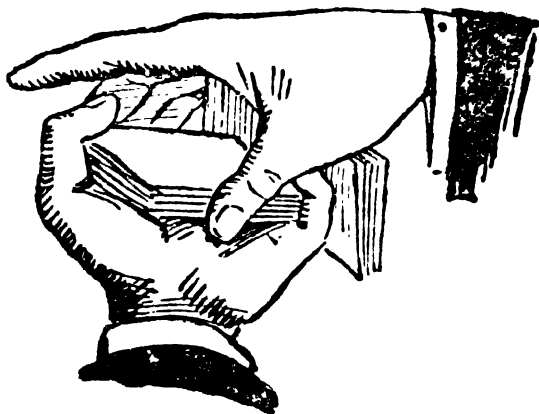


FIG. 17.

packets clear each other, close the left hand; the positions of the packets are now reversed. The movements of the two packets are indicated in Fig. 18.

Described in detail in this manner, it seems impossible that the feat should escape detection. But it is marvellous



FIG. 18.

what skill can be attained in this sleight with sufficient practice. Some performers can manage the whole business sixty or eighty times a minute, and that noiselessly.

Of course, when performing, you cover the movement by a sweep of the hands in some direction, and you do *not*, above all things, look at the cards. Initial attempts should be slow, aiming chiefly at absence of noise, and should be

performed before a mirror. This latter is extremely useful as a check in practising all tricks; it gives you the audience's point of view.

*Second Method (with One Hand only).*—This method is neater, and found by many to be easier, than the more orthodox method just described.

The pack should be taken (in either hand) as shown in Fig. 19. The position of the fingers is important. The pack is held between the thumb and the second and third fingers; the little finger rests against the middle of the

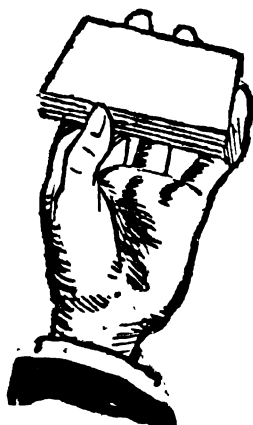


FIG. 19.

lower edge, supporting it, and the first finger takes up its position just behind the top corner farthest away from the thumb.

Now allow the lower half of the pack to fall loosely into the palm of the hand, as in Fig. 20. Next, with the first finger revolve the lower packet (using the fork of the thumb as fulcrum) until its outer and now upper edge rests against the top joint of the thumb, as in Fig. 21. Continue pressing with the first finger, and force the thumb back; this will release the upper half of the pack, which will fall down into the hand, below what was originally the lower packet.

If during the beginning of this sleight you hold the back of the topmost card square to the audience, the movement

of the lower half of the pack cannot be seen. As soon as the upper half is ready to fall you should, of course, move your hand fairly rapidly in some direction or other to cover the closing of the pack in its new position.

Most beginners find this method fairly easy at first, but a good deal of practice is nevertheless necessary to secure the requisite rapid, easy, and noiseless effect.

When using this form of the pass, the best mode of having a chosen or particular card replaced in the pack is as follows: Take the pack as in Fig. 19, hold it out to the audience,



FIG. 20.



FIG. 21.

and say, "Replace the card in the pack, please," meanwhile letting the lower half fall back as in Fig. 20. To the audience this appears quite open and above-board, and they do not realize that the pass is half made before their eyes. Then, whilst saying something to the effect that "You are quite satisfied, then, that your card has been placed in the middle of the pack?" you revolve the lower half of the pack as described above; and finally, to the tune of "Then I will close the pack and place it here," you complete the pass whilst turning towards the table, and lay the cards thereon, chosen card on top, ready for palming or other business.

If you have cut the pack in the ordinary way for the insertion of the card, and yet wish to use the single-handed pass, you must make the "bridge" in order that the pack shall divide at the right place.

*The bridge* is simply the bending of the two halves of the pack in opposite directions, so that when they are placed together a small space is left in the centre.

*Forcing* an ordinary card (as distinct from a card from

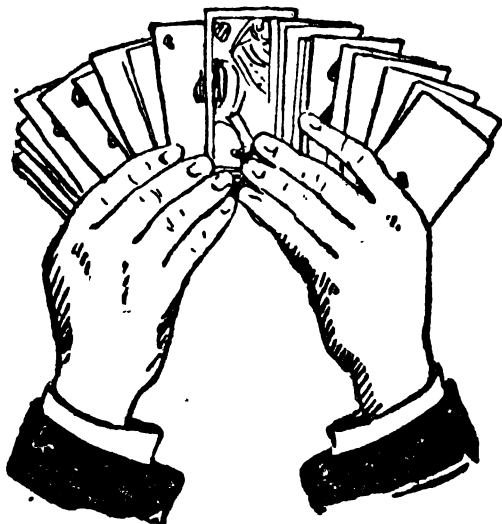


FIG. 22.

a forcing pack) is a slightly risky matter. Nevertheless, many magicians never use forcing packs, relying on their skill to force any particular card. The method is as follows: Advancing towards the audience, commence to spread the cards, backs uppermost, fan-wise, saying, "Will you please choose a card?" The card to be forced is marked by the insertion just above it of the little finger of the left hand. Continuing to spread the cards, watch the spectator's oncoming hand keenly. The card to be forced should just meet it as it reaches the pack.

This sounds as though it would not often succeed. But

it does. If the spectator is slow or hesitates until *the* card is passed, simply close the fan and commence again. If this time you fail to push the right card into his fingers, or if he snatches at some other card, let him keep it; try someone else until you succeed in your endeavour, and finish the trick. Afterwards return to the awkward individual and perform some other trick with his card.

*Forcing a person to think of a certain card* can often be achieved by showing the cards fan-wise, as in Fig. 22, taking care that only the one card is sufficiently exposed for identification.

In concluding this chapter, stress must be laid upon the necessity for practice. This is irksome and discouraging, as the writer well knows. But if the reader has taken the advice offered at the beginning of this book, and has perfected himself in the performance of the tricks given in Chapters I. and II., he will need far less practice than if he had attempted sleight-of-hand straight away.



## CHAPTER IV

### ON MORE ADVANCED TRICKS

AN amateur, even if armed only with the comparatively small repertoire of tricks already described, will find that with the aid of the sleights dealt with in the last chapter he will be able to perform sufficient variations to provide a quite long programme. In addition, he will by this time, if genuinely interested in his art, be able to devise tricks of his very own, and these are always better than merely imitative performances. All tricks depend upon the same principles, the novelty or "difference" of any being merely a question of camouflage. As an example of the manner in which a simple sleight may be worked up into a fairly considerable item on the programme, I take the liberty here of giving in his own words one of the tricks of a well-known performer, as showing how camouflage may be applied. The trick is called, I believe, "The Obedient Aces."

"Permit me to introduce to your notice, ladies and gentlemen, my trained pack of cards. There is nothing very remarkable about their appearance. They look like a perfectly ordinary pack of cards, and, in point of fact, they *are* a perfectly ordinary pack; their only distinguishing feature is that I have had them for some time, and that their natural intelligence has been cultivated by education. You didn't know that cards had any natural intelligence? Oh dear, yes! Some of them are very clever indeed. This is a very intelligent pack; so much so, that now I never think of performing a card trick myself. I just intimate to the cards what is wanted, and *they* do the trick without troubling me at all in the matter. You don't believe it? Fortunately I need not ask you to take my word for it. I will give you ocular demonstration that what I say is correct. I will take out four cards of the same value. I

generally take the Aces, as being the most conspicuous, but if you prefer it I will take any ~~four~~ other cards—it is all the same to me. The Aces are approved? Then I will hand the two black Aces to this gentleman, and the two red Aces to this lady. Will some other person kindly examine the pack, and testify that there is no other Ace in it? Thank you.

“Now, sir, will you be kind enough to place one of the cards you hold on the top of the pack? Good! And now, madam, will you place one of your two cards here in the middle?” (Here the performer opens the pack book-wise in readiness for the single-handed pass.) “Thank you. We have the Ace of Clubs on the top, and the Ace of Hearts in the middle.” (Here he makes the pass, but to the eye of the spectator he appears merely to have closed the pack just opened to receive the card). “Now I am going to order these two cards to change places, but remember what I told you. I am not going to perform the trick; the cards will do that for themselves. Go! Did you hear a little chirping sound? That was the two cards changing places. See for yourselves that I have not deceived you. Here is the Ace of Hearts on the top; and here, right in the middle, is the Ace of Clubs.” (He hands back these two cards to the holders.)

“It does not matter how far the cards may be apart. This time we will place one on the top, and the other at the bottom.” (This is done accordingly.) “Observe, I don’t touch the cards.” (He waves the right hand as if in confirmation of his remark, and, under cover of this movement, which draws all eyes to the right hand, he makes with the left the single-handed pass, thereby bringing both cards to the centre.) “This time I will order both cards to pass to the middle. Go!” (Again the little “chirp” is heard. He shows that the Aces are neither at the top nor bottom; then turning up the faces of the cards, runs them over till he comes to the missing cards, which he shows to be together. While doing this, he slips the little finger between the two cards, and having sufficiently exhibited them, makes, without turning over the cards,

the *two-handed* pass, and then turns them over.) "If I want them back again as at first I have only to say 'Come!' and they instantly return, as you see, to their original situations." (He shows that they are again at top and bottom.)

"I will give you a further proof that the cards themselves perform the trick by using four instead of two. I need hardly tell you that no conjurer, however dexterous, could possibly manipulate four cards at once. This time we will have the two black Aces placed at top and bottom" (this is done), "and the two red ones placed in the middle." (He opens the pack book-wise.) "One at the top of the lower heap, please, and one at the bottom of the upper heap." (This is done accordingly, and the single-handed pass made as before.) "Remember the arrangement, please. The two black Aces at top and bottom, and the two red ones in the middle. Change!" (He shows that the change has taken place, the red Aces being now at top and bottom, and the black ones in the middle.)

"I saw you watching me very narrowly, but I don't think you quite saw how that was done, so I will do it just once more, and ask the cards to go very slowly, so that you may be able to follow the whole process." (He hands back the cards to their respective holders.) "Now, just as before. The Ace of Spades at the bottom, and the Ace of Clubs at the top. Now the other two Aces in the middle."

(The cards are lying on the palm of his left hand, and the performer cuts them by lifting off, *apparently*, the upper portion with his right hand, but actually by making a "false cut." In reality he has already made the pass, the original positions of the two heaps being reversed. When the two red Aces are now put in the middle, they are really placed *between* the two black Aces. The trick is now done. He lets the higher packet fall on the lower, and offers the pack to a spectator.)

"Take the pack into your own hands, sir. The cards will do their duty in your hands just as well as in mine. I shall now order all four cards to come together in the middle. Pass! Did you feel them go? No? That is

strange, but you will certainly find that they have done so. Examine the top and bottom cards. The Aces have departed, have they not? Now look in the middle, and you will find all four together." (The pack is examined, and such is found to be the case.)

*The Walking Card.*—This is a further example of a single sleight coupled with inventiveness and put to good effect.

Procure about a foot or eighteen inches of fine black silk or a long dark hair. (It is assumed that you wear black clothes.) Attach this to a pin fixed to the bottom of your waistcoat in front, and at its other end fix a minute ball of soap or beeswax a little bigger than a pin's head. Stick this little ball on to your lowest waistcoat button, where it may be readily found.

Now have a card chosen and replaced in the middle of the pack. Bring it to the top by the pass (preferably single-handed) and make a false shuffle. Or, if you prefer it, palm the card and allow the audience to shuffle. Shuffling completed, you hold the pack, with the chosen card still on top, in your left hand, and casually remove the wax ball from your waistcoat button. Whilst doing this you must, of course, use some suitable humorous patter to distract the audience. With the wax ball adhering to your right thumb you then take the pack in the right hand, and press the wax on to the back of the top card near the edge.

Now lay out the cards haphazard on the table face upwards (to hide the wax), and "patter" to the effect that you give the audience three guesses in which to tell you how you will find the chosen cards. After a little fun you say, "No, I'm not the old-fashioned type of conjurer who would simply *pick out* your card; I have a newer way—I shall simply order it to come to me!"

So saying you withdraw a little, beckoning to the cards, and the card edges towards you! As it reaches the edge of the table you take it in hand, push off the wax, and after getting the chooser to verify it, pass it round for inspection with the rest of the pack.

*To Deal yourself all the Trumps.*—Arrange a pack so that the fourth card and every following fourth card are

of one suit. The other cards may be haphazard. Substitute this pack for an ordinary one you have been using (secretly, of course), and invite three of the audience to play a hand of whist with you.

Whilst they are coming to sit down, it is best to pass an ordinary pack amongst the audience for inspection, and to substitute your prepared pack (carried in your waistcoat, or in a special card pocket placed just behind and below the hip) whilst walking back to your table or platform. When all is ready, make a false shuffle, preserving the order of the pack, but finally dividing the pack into two, transposing the positions of the halves, and leaving a "bridge" between them. On being cut by another player the cards will almost certainly be divided at the "bridge," and thus brought again to their original order.

Deal in the usual manner, turning up your last card for trumps.

*The Invisibly Changing Cards.*—Ask a volunteer to come forward and pick out the four Kings. Take them from him, and place them on top of the pack, and then deal them off in a row face downwards on the table. Ask your assistant to place his hands on them. Then inquire, "You are sure they are your Kings?" As you have had them since he picked them out, he will say, "No." Argue with him a little, meanwhile palming off three cards. Finally, request him to turn them over again and make sure. When this has been done take them, place them on the pack with the palmed cards above them, and commence as if to deal again. But say instead, "But perhaps you'd like to deal them yourself, to make sure. Deal them in a row, please." This having been done, you know that the last card laid down is a King, and that the remaining Kings are next on the pack. Then say, "Now deal three more cards on here"—indicating the King—"and three here, and here, and here." There are now four packets of four cards, one of which contains all the Kings. By means of the trick already described (p. 14) make your assistant point out, first, two of the packets, and then one of the remaining two packets, disposing of the three packets of indifferent cards

so that only the Kings are left on the table. Request him to hold the packet tightly, and inform him that you will change his three small cards into the three other Kings. Emphasize the fact that he dealt the four Kings separately on to the table himself. After "ruffling" the pack, ask him to examine his cards and see that they really have changed to Kings.

If you have found an opportunity to slip three small cards into his side pocket during the operations, you can announce that the other cards have passed into his pocket.

Space does not allow of further tricks being given in detail. There are hundreds more that might be described, but they are all, at the least, *second-hand*. The aim of every amateur should be to invent his own tricks—new tricks that are out of the common run. The foregoing show how sleights may be brought into play, and a little thought will enable an enthusiast to extend his repertoire almost indefinitely.

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## ADVICE TO AMATEUR CONJURERS

### PATTER.

I HAVE come in contact, now and again, with amateur, yes, and even professional, magicians who were clever enough with their hands, but who, nevertheless, could not patter to save their souls. In such cases it is far better for a person to give a "dumb show" and let it be good, rather than spoil an otherwise good performance by attempting to *ke smile* and look happy (even if you

Personally, I come "on" looking like the proverbial shows, but the fou must not be surprised if the audience and I am bound y have come there to be amused and to me, as I alwæ more entertaining your manner the are not all made æ pleased, and the greater the applause be witty it is pøow.

talk for mere talk

ment "heavy" at

### ELOCUTION.

a magician show, to a certain extent is an actor; such intended to be a t it is important that attention be paid than humorous, a, longer do we wish audiences to cry out d, all said and done, what on earth peaking at all if the audience cannot

Many years ago garments, with s splendid, but if the spectators cannot of which may ha the joke, how can one expect them to have changed (littering magicians fail hopelessly in the it is usual for a cdon, which is a very great pity, as a dress," which, I mice" will entirely spoil an otherwise of the fact that be on your guard and take lessons long tails to the co are extremely han

Let it not be one cannot conjure for this is a wicked too long. Nor ne



contains a score of pockets, it is useless, for although sometimes secret pockets are essential, yet, by arranging one's programme accordingly, it is possible to give a really first-class performance without any aid whatever either from pockets or special clothes.

### TABLES.

There are upon the market a number of so-called "conjuring-tables." These vary in size, quality and price, are very frequently of the tripod-leg order, and generally look (alas) as if they were specially devised for conjuring-purposes, which, in the opinion of the present writer is, perhaps, their greatest drawback.

- name any number of cards in succession . . . . . venience, as they
- To tell whether a packet of cards is odd or even in t . . . . . the same time
- To place four Kings in different parts of the pack, and cal acts look too
- together by a single cut . . . . . fess the modern
- The "ruffle" . . . . . e more correct—
- A simple "false shuffle" . . . . . ially where eggs,
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- Other systems of finding cards "thought of" . . . . .
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- The forcing pack . . . . . hy I cannot say ;
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- The attraction of money: a trick with *biseauté* cards
- Any number of Kings: a finale with the forcing pack
- Special "changing" cards, and how to use them
- The false shuffle (five methods) . . . . . yle" of its own,
- The false cut . . . . . ; you can possibly
- Palming . . . . . e in this country,

but it does not do to be conservative where magic is concerned. I have known magicians "get away with it," not because they were wonderfully clever, but simply because their style was unique.

Have a style of your own, be yourself, original, and don't try to imitate somebody else in the same line of business; in other words, "avoid imitations," as the advertisements say.

#### MANNER.

Your stage manner is all important. Be bright and cheerful, it is catching with everyone, and your audience will become bright and cheerful too. Above all things, for goodness' sake *smile* and look happy (even if you are not). If you come "on" looking like the proverbial "wet-blanket" you must not be surprised if the audience dislike you. They have come there to be amused and entertained, so the more entertaining your manner the better they will be pleased, and the greater the applause when you finally bow.

#### ELOCUTION.

Every magician to a certain extent is an actor; such being the case it is important that attention be paid to elocution. No longer do we wish audiences to cry out "Speak up!" and, all said and done, what on earth is the good of speaking at all if the audience cannot hear the *words*?

A joke may be splendid, but if the spectators cannot hear the *point* of the joke, how can one expect them to laugh? Most pattering magicians fail hopelessly in the matter of elocution, which is a very great pity, as a bad "speaking-voice" will entirely spoil an otherwise tip-top show, so be on your guard and take lessons in elocution.

# CONJURING TRICKS

## PART I

### THE STRING TRICK.

**EFFECT.**—The string is first of all clearly shown to be threaded through the two pillars of wood illustrated in Fig. 1. A knife is taken by the sleight-of-hand expert, and passed through the two pillars, thus cutting the string, the two cut ends of which are then freely exhibited. Next, by merely blowing upon the two pillars the string is restored.

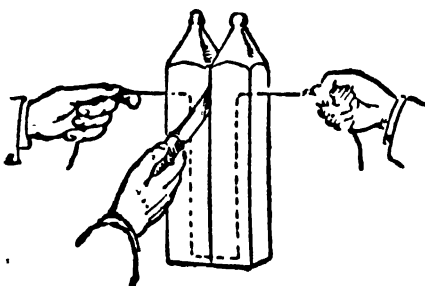


FIG. 1.

**SECRET.**—The pillars are hollow, so that the string does not go from side to side at the top as one might suppose, but (as indicated by the dotted lines) down one pillar and up the other. On the inside of each pillar (and at that point where the knife is to be observed) is stuck a small portion of string; this is not connected in any way whatever with the genuine piece of string, and is merely utilised to *prove* (in conjurer's logic) that the original piece of string has verily been severed.

### THE MAGIC CORKS.

**EFFECT.**—A circular wooden box is shown, quite empty. Four pieces of cork are placed in it, the lid put on, passes made, and, behold! upon removing the lid it is found that the corks have multiplied to eight, in a most baffling

manner The lid is replaced once more, cabalistic sentences pronounced by performer, and, upon taking off the lid, four corks only are now to be seen, as at the beginning.

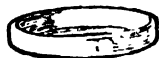


FIG. 2.

SECRET.—The box (shown in Fig. 2) has two lids, the bottom, in reality, being in the middle. Thus it will clearly be seen that if four corks are placed in the top half and eight corks in the lower half, either of these quantities can be produced at any given moment, according to whichever lid is taken off; and in order to

increase or diminish the number of corks, as the case may be, all that the performer need do is to simply turn his apparatus upside down, and the thing is done! No noise is heard, cork being silent in movement.

## THE WONDERFUL BRAN BARREL

EFFECT.—A neatly-made barrel, 1½ inches in length by about 1 inch in diameter, is exhibited—empty. A small highly-coloured cloth bag is also shown, and found to contain a little bran. The magician puts the barrel into the bag, and brings it forth again full of bran, which he tips back into the bag, that all may see everything is quite above board and free from deception. Once more he inserts the barrel into the bag, and takes it out just as full of bran as it was before. He now places it upon a table and covers it over with a borrowed pocket-handkerchief. Upon removing the handkerchief again, the bran is found not in the barrel but in the bag—the barrel being perfectly empty!

SECRET.—The barrel has only one end closed in; the other end is left permanently open. To the outside of the bottom (or top, as the case may be, for it does duty for both) is glued a small quantity of bran, so that the barrel may be made to appear full of bran, even when in reality it is entirely empty. To work the trick successfully, proceed as follows: Show the audience the bran in bag, so that they may be quite satisfied as to its bona

fides. Next display the empty barrel, which introduce into the bag and *really fill* with some bran, the latter being deliberately poured back into the bag, so that all may see and know that you are not deceiving them! Now put the barrel a second time into the bag, and *pretend* to fill once more; but instead of actually doing so, you merely turn the barrel in such a manner as to bring the faked end to the top. On covering the barrel with the pocket-handkerchief, ample opportunity is afforded of turning it upside down, when it can be shown *empty*. Finally, the entire contents of the bag can be emptied out on to a plate, which will give the impression that the bran has disappeared from the barrel and entered the bag. At the most there is only just enough bran to fill the barrel.

#### GRAVITATION DEFIED.

**EFFECT.**—A long cord, with a tassel at one end, is handed for examination, together with a beautifully-turned and polished ebony ball. This latter has a hole running right through its centre. The conjurer places his foot upon the tassel and threads the cord through the ball (as in Fig. 3). At the word of command, the ball will either descend slowly or stop at any point desired. At the close of the entertainment both ball and cord can again be examined, without the least fear of detection.

**SECRET.**—How and why the ball stops at will is not on account of the word of command, but by reason of the fact that the cord is pulled taut at such times, and that the holes in the ball (not being exactly opposite one another) cause stoppage naturally. When the performer requires the ball to continue its descent, he merely has to slacken the cord.



FIG. 3.

#### TABLE LIFTING EXTRAORDINARY.

**EFFECT.**—A light table is seen upon the stage or platform, and upon this the wonder worker places his hand,

pressing it (fingers and thumb spread out) quite flat (as in Fig. 4). Presently the table begins to move—it rocks to and fro; then leaves the floor entirely; swings about in mid-air, without any means of support; and, finally, is seen completely upside down, as in the illustration. By this time the audience is almost breathless with excitement and wonder. Now the table is again lowered to the floor, and the onlookers are left guessing.

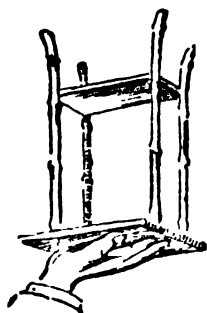


FIG. 4.

**SECRET.**—Generally speaking, conjurers do not like to wear finger rings, as they are apt to get in the way, but in this case one *must* be used in order to do the trick. The ring may be worn on the

middle finger (of either hand), and has the appearance of an ordinary gold wedding ring.

On the underside, however, there is a little notch (or piece cut out), as indicated in Fig. 5. Into this recess, or groove, a stout pin, or tiny nail, is allowed to rest, it having been previously hammered into the centre of the table top.



FIG. 5.

It will therefore be seen that once the opening in the ring embraces the pin, or nail, it is a simple matter to raise the table with (seemingly) the tips of the fingers and move it about in almost any position. A small bamboo table is best, and if a hoop is passed over same whilst it is in mid-air, additional effect will be produced—proving beyond dispute that no cords, wires, or threads of any kind are used.

## THE MAGNETISED HAT.

**EFFECT.**—In effect this deception is much the same as the preceding trick ("Table Lifting Extraordinary"); in fact, the only difference between them is that in the one case a table is used and in the other a silk hat is employed. Having borrowed a hat (always borrow articles where possible—it adds to the mystery) from a member of the audience, return to the platform with it; place your right hand flat upon the top thereof (as in Fig. 6), and hold the brim with your left hand. Talk to the hat in a

gentle but persuasive manner; and you may let go with your left hand altogether, for the hat will not fall to the floor, but remain suspended from the right hand!

**SECRET.**—You have in your vest pocket a metal fake, which consists of a small flat piece of thin brass, to the underside of which are attached two stout pins (Fig. 7), and to the upper side of which are fastened two projections—one slightly curved, and the other perfectly straight. When returning to the platform, and under cover of your body, this fake is extracted from its hiding-place, and quickly adjusted. By inserting the fingers between the two upper projections, the it may be twisted in all manner of ways—upside down and downside up—without fear of accident. The fake does no harm to the chapeau whatever. Remarking that

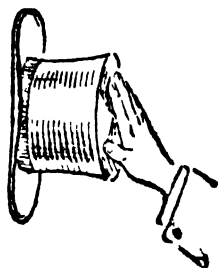


FIG. 6.

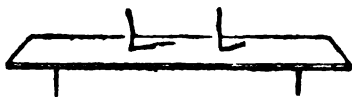


FIG. 7.

the hat is a little ruffled, you take a silk handkerchief to smooth same, and while doing this you neatly remove the fake.

### A PERFORMING CIGAR.

Having worked "The Magnetised Hat," you go down amongst the audience in order to return the headgear to its owner; but instead of doing so, you say: "Oh, no, I quite forgot; I haven't done with it yet. Could some gentleman oblige me with the loan of a cigar?" Having obtained the cigar, you return to your table and proceed to place it in an upright position on the crown of the hat (as illustrated in Fig. 8). Your left hand is inside the hat, and the right hand holds the

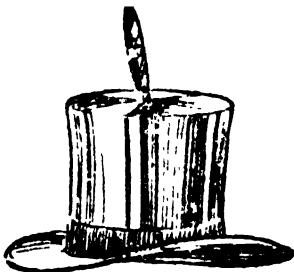


FIG. 8.

cigar, but only for a few seconds. Then—oh, wonder of wonders!—the right hand is moved away, and the cigar not only remains in the perpendicular, but actually moves about in a most animated manner, and does not fall.

SECRET.—Whilst returning to the platform, you remove a black pin from the edge of your coat (or vest), and pass two-thirds of it through the centre of the crown of the "topper." The portion of the cigar which usually goes into somebody's mouth is then placed immediately over the pin point, and by gentle pressure thrust on to the pin, which cannot be seen by the audience by reason of its colour. The left hand inside the hat can now wobble the pin about *ad lib.*, and the cigar will move accordingly.

Placing the hat down on the rear edge of your table (having first removed the cigar), and returned same, with compliments and many thanks, to its owner, you now proceed to work the time-honoured and ever popular

#### INEXHAUSTIBLE HAT TRICK.

"Oh, I'm sorry, sir, I quite forgot your hat. I might just as well have brought it with me, and so saved myself a journey." So saying, return to your table, pick up the hat with your right hand, and pretend to hand it back to its possessor; but instead of so doing, you say, "Excuse me just one moment, sir—will you, please?" And, placing your right hand into the hat, whilst your left hand holds the brim, you proceed to remove about two dozen metal cups, which are prettily painted, and look quite attractive.

SECRET.—At the back of the table is a shelf, which cannot be seen from the front owing to the table-cloth. Upon this shelf the *bottomless and specially-made* cups reside, having been previously packed one inside the other, so that they occupy a minimum amount of space. At the conclusion of the last trick you took the precaution to place the hat directly over these cups; so that when the time arrived for you to pick up the hat, you picked up the cups with it, and with the same hand (the right). This move is perfectly easy if you place the right thumb on brim of hat, and insert the middle finger into the centre of the cups, hat and cups being thus hauled up together, and the "load" effected.



## ANOTHER METHOD.

I suppose everybody has seen the inexhaustible hat worked at some time or other, and it is quite possible many of my readers know at least one method of working this time-honoured deception. It is, however, equally probable that they do not know the method which I intend here to describe, and which is easy and effective.

**EFFECT.**—A borrowed hat is exhibited and proven empty. The performer immediately puts his hand into the hat and produces various articles, which, by reason of their bulk and number, could not in the ordinary way have got into the hat on their own account.

**SECRET.**—In this case the secret lies in the fact that the wizard must wear a fob watch-chain, and this should be made of black silk, and be free from an overplus of gold ornamentation. It may, however, have one *small* seal attached to one end, whilst at the other end (which goes into the left waistcoat pocket) is—no, not a watch, as might reasonably be expected, but a small bundle with a black silk handkerchief on the outside thereof and tied round with a piece of black silk thread.

**PRESENTATION.**—As people think a conjurer more clever if he works with borrowed articles, it is perhaps best in this case to borrow a silk or felt hat, as the case may be, but do not make shift with a soft felt or cap, as these are not nearly so suitable.

Turn the greaseband inside out, so that your audience can see that no elephants or tables are concealed there; hold hat in your left hand, with thumb above the brim and fingers below same. Now with your right hand you must *misdirect* the attention of audience for a second, and this can either be done by picking up your wand, blowing your nose, moving a chair, or altering the position of some article upon your table; but in any case the *right* hand must be employed so that all eyes are drawn in the direction of that hand, thus leaving the left hand free quietly to slip fob-chain (with parcel attached thereto) from pocket to hat.

This done, it will now be mere child's play to break the black silk thread and produce a huge quantity of silk flags

(which roll up into a very small compass) and a bouquet of flowers, under cover of which the black silk handkerchief is palmed.

The biggest production—be it flag, handkerchief, or anything else—should be the last article to be produced, and under cover of it the fob chain should be replaced, and you need not fear the onlookers having “spotted” your trickery.

With regard to the size of the production, I can only say that this must to a large extent depend upon the size of your left waistcoat pocket, but, needless to add, the bigger the production the better the effect. The flowers above referred to are not the genuine article, but specially designed for the use of magicians; they are sold by all magical dealers and are of silk.

If my readers think seriously of working this deception in the manner indicated above, it might perhaps be worth while going to the length of getting your tailor to enlarge the left pocket of your dress waistcoat, as the size will not be noticed by anybody in the auditorium, and, obviously, the bigger the pocket the bigger the load. This method is worthy of a trial; experience will decide.

## HANDKERCHIEFS TIE AND UNTIE THEMSELVES.

**EFFECT.**—Two coloured silk handkerchiefs are exhibited, and may be handed round for close inspection. They are then thrown up into the air, and come down tied together. They are once more tossed into the air, and on descending it is noticed they are single, and no trace of a knot is to be seen.

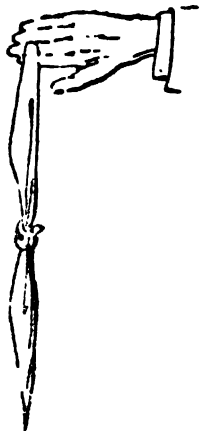


FIG. 9.

**SECRET.**—Get a very small, thin indiarubber band, and place it over the thumb and first finger of the right hand, keeping the thumb and first finger as close together as possible. With your left hand pick up the two coloured pieces of silk, and hand them to one of the audience for scrutiny. In receiving the handkerchiefs back from the scrutineer, care should



FIG. 10.

be taken to catch hold of one corner of each, and to promptly place them between the thumb and first finger of the right hand, immediately below the elastic band. Standing with your left side towards the audience, you then throw the handkerchiefs into the air. But before doing this, you drop your hand slightly, and in that moment the elastic band is allowed to slip from its previous position, and to encircle the handkerchiefs, which now appear to be tied together as they fall to the floor. You now *gently* pick up a corner of one silk, and the other is seen to be hanging therefrom, as if they were tied together. In throwing them a second time into the air, be careful to give the handkerchief which you are holding a sudden pull just as it leaves your hand. This will at once free the elastic band, and as the silks again descend the audience will notice that no knot (or sign of one) is to be found. Explain to the company that this

is a very *knotty* problem! This deception is well illustrated in Figs. 9 and 10.

## THE MYSTIC NAIL.

**EFFECT.**—A box of ordinary household nails is given for examination, and then, after one has been selected by the audience for use, the conjurer passes it through his finger (Fig. 11). Upon withdrawal of nail, the said finger is found to be absolutely free from injury, and the nail may be passed round for further inspection.



FIG. 11.

**SECRET.**—Fig. 12 completely gives away the show! The box contains nails of one kind only (not mixed sizes), and they are of the same sort as the faked duplicate, which you hold in the palm of your right hand. As, however, you hold the box of nails in the same hand, the fake is not seen by anybody. A nail has been chosen, and you return to your table in order to place down the box. At this critical moment you have your chance, and you make use of it. The previously palmed fake is adjusted to finger (as in Fig. 11), whilst the genuine nail is securely held under the cover of thumb, second, third, and fourth fingers, as indicated by the dotted lines. After making dreadful faces, and groaning, as if in great pain, you again turn towards your friendly table—ostensibly to pick up a small tray, but in reality to give opportunity for palming fake. Reproducing real nail, this is allowed to drop on to tray, and then once more handed round for minute inspection.



FIG. 12.

## THE BEWITCHED BOTTLE.

**EFFECT.**—A bottle, made of boxwood, is handed to someone in the audience, together with four little pillars, which we will call 1, 2, 3, and 4. These are of different colours—viz., blue, red, yellow, and white respectively. The performer goes out of the room, and during his

absence a volunteer takes off the top of bottle (A), and into the hollow neck places whichever pillar he desires, replacing the top. Upon the conjurer re-entering the room, he picks up the wooden bottle, and at once states correctly the colour of the pillar contained therein. He never fails!

**SECRET.**—No. 1 pillar is heavier than all the others. No. 2 is longer than all the others; so that when placed in neck of bottle the top will not quite go down to its proper position. No. 3 is thinner than all the others, and therefore rattles when placed in the neck of bottle. No. 4 is lighter than all the others. A little practice in private will soon enable the novice to guess correctly every time. The bottle is made in two parts, divided by a screw at B (Fig. 13), the lower portion being used to house all the four pillars when they are not in use. It will be readily understood that whilst the trick is being performed the lower section of the bottle must be perfectly empty. No. 1 is made of lead, No. 2 of wood, No. 3 of plaster of Paris, and No. 4 of chalk; but, being nicely painted, they might be all of the same material, judging from appearance.

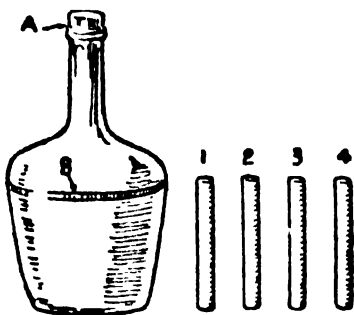


FIG. 13.

### INDIAN BEAD MYSTERY.

**EFFECT.**—Three beads (usually made of wood) are seen

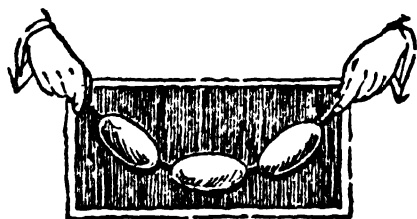


FIG. 14.

to be threaded upon two pieces of string (Fig. 14). Spectators hold the ends of the strings, whilst Mr. Wizard places his hand over the central bead (Fig. 15); when lo! at the word of command (coupled with a stout

pull), the beads leave the strings, neither of which have been cut in any way whatever. It adds considerably to



FIG. 15.

the effect if the ends of the strings are tied together thus —A to C and

B to D. The beads are then removed without the knots being untied!

**SECRET.**—As a matter of fact, neither of the pieces of string runs the entire length of the beads—as the company are led to suppose. Fig. 16 indicates that the strings are first of all folded in halves; one piece then remains a loop, and through this the other piece of string is passed and folded back, so that the central bead keeps the strings in position, as suggested



FIG. 16.

by the dotted lines in the accompanying diagram (Fig. 16). It will therefore be seen that after the strings have been duly adjusted, and the first bead put on (which must remain in the centre), everything is plain sailing—or, in other words, the experiment depends more upon the preparation beforehand than to the actual performance of the trick. Personally, I think this quite a smart deception.

## A HANDY CANISTER.

The writer is by no means a lover of tricks which depend for their success upon a piece of apparatus being turned upside down; but, at the same time, there are exceptions to all rules, and the beginner will find this canister very useful.

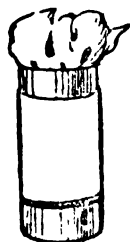


FIG. 17.

**EFFECT.**—A canister is proved to be empty, and into it is placed a handkerchief (Fig. 17). The lid is put on, and a few weird passes made. Upon the removal of the lid, the handkerchief has vanished into thin air, and in its place some lovely spring flowers are to be seen.

**SECRET.**—Fig. 18 shows that the canister is

## CONJURING TRICKS

possessed of two compartments (indicated by A and B), separated from one another by a division running almost the entire length of the canister. Into one of these compartments is placed the handkerchief, whilst into the other compartment (before the show started) has already been placed some specially-made conjuring flowers, the petals of which are of vari-coloured tissue paper, and the leaves of green silk. Each flower has a spring in it, so that when collapsed they take up very little room; but when allowed to expand, they spread out in a most wonderful fashion. The canister has two lids—one at the bottom and the other at the top. In order to effect a change of any kind, one need only turn the canister upside down while returning to your table.



FIG. 13.

## THE CONJURER'S FRUIT KNIFE.

EFFECT.—A shilling is borrowed, and vanished by any method the wizard cares to adopt. Ultimately it is found inside an orange—the fruit having been selected by a disinterested party. When I was at school a lady conjurer gave an entertainment in our gymnasium; and her repertoire included this neat deception, which completely baffled me, and others too.

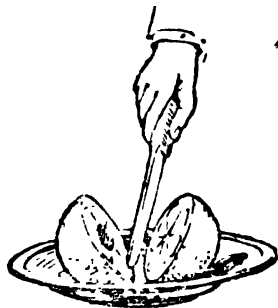


FIG. 19.

SECRET.—The trick mainly depends for its success upon a specially constructed knife, which is illustrated in Fig. 20, and will now be described in detail: A is a spring catch, which holds and presses the shilling firmly against the blade. It is regulated by pressure (or otherwise) upon the small handle B, which is hidden from public gaze by the true handle. For this particular deception, the most satisfactory way of getting rid of the coin is through the medium of the *French drop*.



FIG. 20.

(otherwise known as "le tourniquet"), which sleight is fully described and illustrated on p. 20, of "Hermann's Book of Magic."\* It adds considerably to the effect if a member of the audience selects an orange from a plateful of say half a dozen; for, obviously, it is perfectly immaterial what sort of orange is used. The knife lies on your table, with the blade towards the audience—thus the coin is not seen. The fruit has been selected, and you proceed to cut it with the knife. When half-way through, press small handle B, thus releasing shilling, which is now discovered well embodied. (See Fig. 19.)

## THE BARBER'S POLE.

**EFFECT.**—A number of paper shavings are eaten by the magical expert, and, as a result, a barber's pole in national colours is produced from his mouth—as seen in Fig. 21.

**SECRET.**—He does not really eat the paper. As he places one bit of paper in his mouth, the previous piece is removed and palmed. The pole is made of red, white, and blue paper, which is rolled (by machinery) in the style of a roller bandage, and to the most central portion of which is attached a small piece of string. The whole thing, being in a compressed form, can very easily be retained in the palm of either hand. Whilst appearing to place a piece of paper in your mouth, you introduce the barber's pole. Now, with first finger and thumb of right or left hand, catch hold of the little piece of string and gently draw it out. As you continue to pull, so the pole will unwind itself to the extent of about three feet.

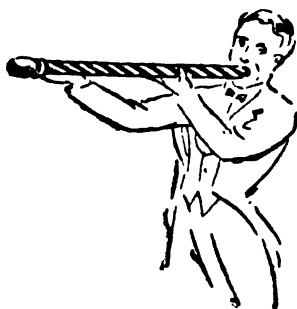


FIG. 21.

\* Published in Chicago by Frederick J. Drake and Co., and sold in England at one shilling.



## THE HAUNTED UMBRELLA.

The great 'charm about "the Haunted Umbrella" is that it requires no initial outlay.

**EFFECT.**—An ordinary umbrella is freely examined by the audience (or otherwise, according to taste). The conjurer seats himself upon a chair, and proceeds to make mystic passes over and around the umbrella; when, to the astonishment of everybody (the conjurer excepted), the umbrella stands at "attention," as shown in Fig. 22.

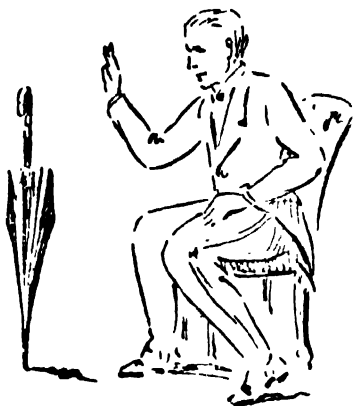


FIG. 22.

**SECRET.**—The mystic passes are of no consequence, one way or the other; they are merely introduced as a species of showmanship, on which account they should not be neglected. Prior to the commencement of this marvellous illusion, you must take the precaution to put on a black suit of clothes. To the left trousers leg, previously sew a strong piece of black thread, at the end of which you have made a loop. The loop-end must now be inserted into your left trousers pocket. The only other requirement is a fair-sized black pin, which must be placed in readiness behind the right knee. Whilst pattering freely upon umbrellas generally, and the one in question in particular, ample opportunity is afforded for transferring the piece of black thread from your left trousers pocket to behind your right knee, where the loop encircles the aforesaid black pin. The umbrella, of course, stands between the performer and the thread; so that when the knees are at a sufficient distance from one another to cause the thread not to sag, the poor old umbrella has no other alternative, but *must* stand at "attention"!

## A FUNNY FUNNEL.

With the possession of this accessory you may secure a hearty laugh, at the expense of an assistant, whenever wine (or other liquid) has been magically produced and consumed.

**EFFECT.**—The exponent of modern magic invites somebody on to the platform, for the purpose of partaking of a little refreshment. Wine having been duly drunk, the magician takes a funnel, places it to the elbow of his assistant, and forthwith therefrom apparently flows the wine which has recently been consumed. A glass should be held underneath the funnel: and further humour may be added to the scene by working the assistant's disengaged arm as one would work a pump handle.

**SECRET.**—The funnel is really double—or, in other words, it consists of a funnel within a funnel. In front of the handle is a tiny hole, which must be plugged with conjurer's wax when you desire to fill the funnel with wine. This is easily accomplished, if one finger be placed over the open end, when the wine will remain within the funnel until the end of the demonstration, provided the little pellet of wax is left undisturbed. It will readily be understood, in order to cause the wine to escape all that is necessary is to remove the aforesaid wax by the thumb nail.

This trick, well worked up, causes a considerable amount of merriment.

## A USEFUL SUGAR-BAG.

A man of mystery constantly requires a piece of apparatus for getting rid of a handkerchief or other small article—such as a watch, for instance. One of the simplest methods is by using a paper cone, which is shaped like the familiar grocer's sugar-bag, and can be made up before the very eyes of the spectators, without fear of detection.

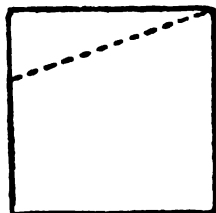


FIG. 23.

**EFFECT.**—You wish to work a trick

## CONJURING TRICKS

in which, we will say, the vanishing of a watch is imperative. On your table lies a square sheet of white paper, which you proceed to pick up and fold, as in the accompanying illustration. Into this the chronometer is dropped; but upon opening the paper cone later the twenty-guinea half-hunter (or Ingersoll) is found to be "missing."

~ SECRET.—The paper of which the aforesaid cone is made is not really quite so innocent as the audience are kind enough to believe, for it is in reality two pieces of paper exactly alike, gummed together at their edges, and well pressed, so as to appear as one single sheet. One piece of paper has a slit or cut running diagonally from side to side, as indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 23. This then forms a kind of pocket, into which a watch can be placed, and there remain unnoticed even when the cone is opened out. It is best to make the sugar bag (or cone) before the audience, and not prior to the commencement of the "show," as they are then more likely to believe that it is entirely free from anything in the shape of trickery. And having made it, you place one hand inside, ostensibly to press out the dents, but really to open the pocket portion. This essential move looks quite natural, and fortunately does not raise the slightest suspicion.

## WINE VERSUS BRAN.

EFFECT.—A wine bottle containing "Sauvignon" (or cold tea, for that matter!) is held in the performer's hand, and from it he pours several glasses of wine (or make-believe). The bottle is then stood upon a tray, and covered over with an ornamental piece of cardboard  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter by  $9\frac{1}{8}$  inches in length—or, in other words, just large enough to envelop the bottle. Upon the cover being removed from the bottle, the latter is seen to have completely disappeared, and in its place is found a large quantity of bran (Fig. 24)—much to the astonishment of the audience.

SECRET.—The cover is so entirely free from deception that it can be handed to the spectators for minute examination; which, however, cannot be said of the

bottle—this is given in detail in Fig. 25. A is the portion occupied by the liquid; B is a division  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches from the top of the bottle; C is the receptacle for the bran; and D is a loose or movable bottom. The bottle is made of stout tin and japanned black, to look like the real thing; and, indeed, it cannot at a short distance be distinguished from the genuine article. In order to keep the bottom in position, the middle, third, and fourth fingers are allowed to remain underneath the bottle, whilst the first finger and thumb encircle same. Thus held it is quite impossible for the bran to escape prematurely. When the bran is to be disclosed, a little digital pressure on the cover will enable the conjurer to bring away the bottle too, as the

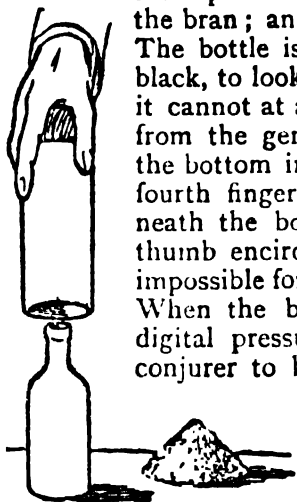


FIG. 24.

cardboard of which the cover is made is quite thin, and therefore pliable. It will add considerably to the effect if the performer will first take a label from off a real wine bottle and stick it

on to the trick bottle. Should the wizard wish to display the cover empty, *after* the appearance of the bran, this, too, can be brought about by following these directions: To the back of a chair tie a large tea-cosy, or waste-paper basket, which latter must be padded at the bottom and sides with wool, or anything similar, that will deaden the sound of the falling bottle. Over the front of the chair an antimacassar is thrown, and permanently prevented from slipping (and so giving the show away) by the use of small drawing-pins. The antimacassar looks natural, and nobody will suspect the chair is faked. The conjurer's wand should be placed upon the seat of the chair. Now, having poured out as many glasses of *wine* as possible, and covered the bottle over with the apparatus designed for that purpose, proceed to make certain incantations (according to taste), and then remove cover; but this time carry away within it the bottle, which latter is dropped behind the chair into



FIG 25.

your improvised *servante*, whilst your disengaged hand picks up the wand. The audience will divide their attention between the bran and the wand whilst the bottle slips away (under cover of your body and the antimacassar) unobserved, and the cardboard cylinder can once more be handed round without fear of detection.

## PART II

### THE EVER-CHANGING DIE.

TRICKS with dice are multifarious, but they are not all equally effective. The one about to be explained, however, is both new and startling, having the further advantage of being capable of introduction into almost any magical programme—provided the audience are not too close to the performer. The general effect is as follows: a perfectly solid die is shown, and has, say, 5 spots on that side which faces the audience. The conjurer passes his hand gently over the die, and, withdrawing it, reveals the fact that 5 has changed to 4.

The die is now turned round, so that, say, 3 spots are facing the audience. Upon the mystic hand of the artist being passed over the surface of the die, 3 becomes 2; similarly, 6 becomes 5; and finally, the 1 spot vanishes, and is produced from behind the knee, or some equally *impossible* place. This trick should be worked in conjunction with one of a like nature (e.g., "the dice box," or "the dice through the hat"), as otherwise it is apt to fall a bit flat. But now for the secret. A glance at Fig. 26 will at once explain much. Those spots which either appear magically or disappear at the discretion of the wizard are circular pieces of wood, black on one side and white on the other. On either side (i.e., right and left) of such spots there is a little wire pin (A A, Fig. 26), which fits into a small socket—this enables

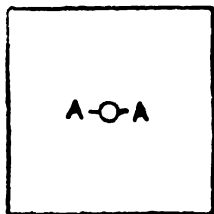


FIG. 26.

the spot to be made either visible or invisible, at the will of the magician, by merely turning it once on its own axis through digital pressure. By cutting a circular piece of cardboard the same size as the spots, and sticking white paper on the one side of same, you may (through the medium of secret pockets) vanish a spot from the die and *discover* it behind your knee.

## LIDLESS CARD BOX.

This must not be confused with the old-fashioned wooden box, the secret of which is known to every schoolboy. The lidless cardbox is made of brass, and measures  $4 \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. A card placed into this box

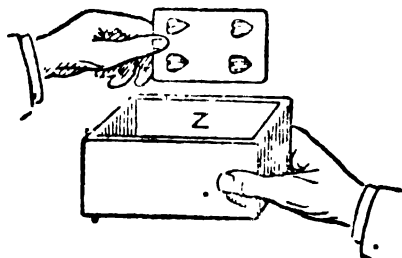


FIG. 27.

immediately vanishes, and may be produced elsewhere. The box is constructed with a double back—that is to say, Z (Fig. 27) is not really the back of the box, but merely a tin flap; which, being painted black, like the rest of the interior, can-

not be distinguished a short distance away from the true back. At the left bottom corner of the back of the box there is a small aperture  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch high by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide. Through this a little hook (not unlike the button part of a glove hook) is extended, and is attached to the flap inside, which can easily be made to fall (and thus hide a card) by manipulating the said hook. This piece of apparatus is very inexpensive, and extremely useful. The disadvantage about it, however, is that it cannot be examined by the audience. It could be used in conjunction with

## THE MAGIC PHOTO FRAME,

which looks very much like most other plush photo frames. It is carte-de-visite size. This is entirely different from the sand frame explained in so many magical books—which frame it resembles in price only. The trick is worked thus: The wizard "forces" a card

upon a member of his audience, which card is then vanished (as in the manner described in the foregoing section), and ultimately found in a photo frame, the latter having been previously shown perfectly empty, and freely exhibited back and front. The one and only way in which this frame varies from most others is that it has an opening at the top of the back, through which a piece of black silk passes. This is exactly the same material as the real back (inside)—hence, when looking through the glass, it is absolutely impossible even for the expert to tell whether he is looking at the genuine back, or merely the movable blind of black silk. Before beginning this trick a duplicate of the card to be *forced* must be inserted in the frame, and under the blind, so as to be completely hidden by it. In picking up the frame, to show the back view, the fingers of the right hand should cover the little bit of blind which protrudes at the top; and a silk handkerchief (or a borrowed cotton one, if you please) is thrown over the frame. Card is now vanished—handkerchief removed, and card discovered. The blind is of course withdrawn in the act of taking away the handkerchief. If the latter is your own, you can just drop it on the table, and so hide the fake; if, however, it is a borrowed one, you must take care to drop the blind on your *servante* before returning it to its owner.

#### HANDKERCHIEF FROM CANDLE FLAME.

The performer displays both hands, back and front; then suddenly produces a red silk handkerchief, which he proceeds to rub between his palms until it finally disappears, and is re-produced from the flame of a candle which has been burning on his table all the evening. So much for the effect; now for "how it's done." To begin with, between the second and third fingers of the right hand the magician wears what is known as a "false finger," an excellent representation of which is given in Fig. 28. This he has previously loaded with a red silk handkerchief. Having shown both hands freely, he places



FIG. 28.

the palm of the left hand over the back of the right hand, under cover of which movement he takes the opportunity to remove the false finger from right hand ; and, holding same in left hand, he withdraws the silk with the fingers of his right hand, waving handkerchief before the astonished eyes of all present—

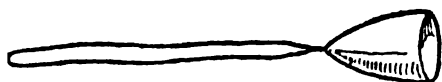


FIG. 29.

who naturally keep their gaze fixed on the handkerchief. The illusionist avails himself of the chance thus given to drop his false finger into the left coat-tail pocket. Having "produced" a handkerchief, the next thing is to "vanish" same; and this may be brought about by the employment of a "vanisher" (Fig. 29).

This consists of a small metal cone, open at one end, and to the other end (torpedo-shaped) of which is attached a piece of double elastic, this latter running through a succession of eyes sewn to the back of performer's waistcoat, and in a direct line with the right waistcoat pocket. The elastic is fastened to the buckle in the middle of the waistcoat at the back; and the cone (which is painted jet black) rests quietly in the waistcoat pocket on the right side, until released by the fingers of the right hand. During this process a little misdirecting can be executed by the left hand, which temporarily holds the silk, and then proceeds to thrust it into the semi-clenched fist of the right hand, the latter encircling the "vanisher" unknown to the audience, who, should they see anything black between the fingers, will not be able to distinguish the "vanisher" from the performer's black clothes. The silk having been pushed carefully and completely into the said "vanisher," the latter is released, flies behind the entertainer's back, and is hidden by his coat. In working this sleight, care must be taken to continue to rub the hands together long after the handkerchief has really gone, to put the spectators off the scent as much as possible. Or it is a good plan to bring the hands into the direction of the mouth, and to gently blow upon them—at intervals murmuring "Going—going—gone!" The sleeves can then be rolled up, in order to convince the smart ones that you



have not disposed of the silk through that medium. The silk is now apparently withdrawn from a candle flame, which is the climax of the trick, and makes an excellent finish. This effect is made possible by the introduction of yet another piece of apparatus, which, like the "vanisher" is unseen by the audience. It consists of a tin tube, painted white, and having at the top and also at the bottom a small spike (Fig. 30), which pierces the candle—thus being held in position, and at the same time hidden from the public gaze. This tube contains the handkerchief (which must be made of pure silk, and of a small size), a tiny portion of which must protrude (*vide* Fig. 30) at the top so as to be readily withdrawn; and, to the onlooker, it will seem as if the silk has actually been extracted from the very flame! If my readers do not care to risk vanishing a handkerchief in the manner already described, they might prefer

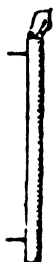


FIG. 30.

### THE HANDKERCHIEF WAND

which is perfectly hollow—16½ inches in length and 2½ inches in circumference. The middle of this article is black, and the ends are made of white ivory; and from one of such ends a steel rod, 13 inches in length, occupies the centre of the wand, and terminates

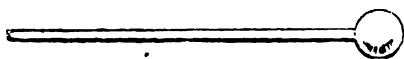


FIG. 31.

ates in a round knob of bone, which is indicated in Fig. 31. Fig. 32, however, shows the wand complete, with the metal rod indicated by dotted lines. F is a small block of wood attached to one of the ivory ends, and into this piece of wood is inserted the steel rod at N, which terminates in a knob at H. When end Z is withdrawn from the balance of the wand, it brings the rod away with it. To use the wand, make a large paper cone similar to that employed by grocers for sugar. Take this in your left

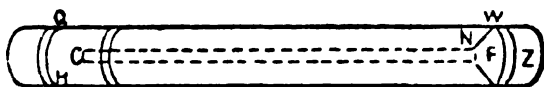


FIG. 32.

piece of wood is inserted the steel rod at N, which terminates in a knob at H. When end Z is withdrawn from the balance of the wand, it brings the rod away with it. To use the wand, make a large paper cone similar to that employed by grocers for sugar. Take this in your left

hand; pick up wand at end Q with your right hand; insert wand into paper cone, so that end W comes into contact with apex of cone (drawing attention to the fact that "the cone is full of emptiness"); grip end of wand Z through the cone, and withdraw the remainder of wand; place silk top of knob H (which will not be seen by the audience, owing to the paper cone), and, with the idea of "pressing it well down to the bottom of the cone," insert wand—taking care to get the open end of same immediately over the rod; H pressing downwards, the handkerchief then becomes entirely enveloped by the magician's "Sign-of-Office." Now withdraw wand; twist up top of paper cone to prevent the silk from escaping, and get someone to hold it very carefully. As you "would not deceive anybody for the world," you ask your volunteer to "kindly undo the paper once more, so that the audience may see that the handkerchief is still there." Your request is complied with, when you proceed to extract silk from candle flame as explained.

#### THE MAGIC BUTTON-HOLE.

This makes a first-class opening trick, is inexpensive to buy, and causes considerable astonishment. The prestidigitator, in commencing his entertainment, generally makes a short speech; and in this instance he remarks that owing to his having packed his bag in great haste he very foolishly omitted to bring a flower for his coat. Nevertheless, a single wave of his wand and, lo! a lovely flower is at once seen in his button-hole. This is one of the many tricks which largely depends upon a piece of elastic for its success. The flower is artificial; but it might easily be mistaken for a real one, as it is well made, and looks quite natural. To it is attached a piece of thin black elastic, 10 inches long, which terminates in a loop, through which a black safety-pin passes. The elastic must be passed through the (flower) button-hole of the conjurer's coat, immediately underneath which a small hole must be pierced (this will be covered by the lapel), so that the elastic may be passed through same also, and affixed by the safety-pin to the back of the waistcoat. Having placed the flower in your button-hole, and adjusted

the elastic and pin, pull forward same and place it under your arm, where it will remain until the arm is raised in the act of waving your wand. The pressure being taken away, the floral decoration appears like a flash! The elastic should be renewed from time to time.

### A WONDERFUL SOUP-PLATE.

The conjurer comes forward with a soup-plate in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. He places the latter over the former, and, to the bewilderment of all present, upon the handkerchief being once more removed the soup-plate is found to contain a charming bouquet of

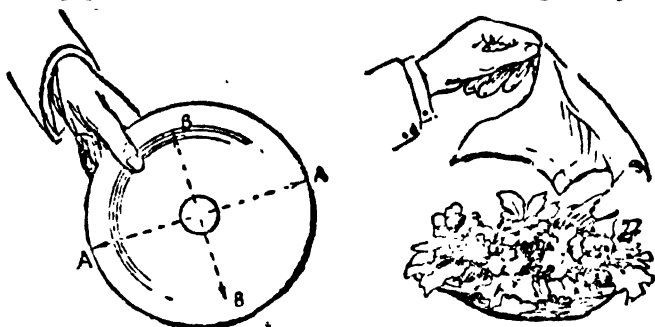


FIG. 33.

flowers. This is an extremely pretty trick, and on that account is always a favourite with the ladies. The secret, of course, lies in the plate, which is made of tin, painted white, and most beautifully decorated—particularly in the centre (Fig. 33). The diameter of the plate is 10 inches outside (from A to A), and the inside (from B to B) is 8 inches. There is also a trap in the centre (Fig. 34, L), 3 inches by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches, which works on a spring hinge at Q, and is released at the correct moment by a slight pull on the small round knob N (which is underneath the plate). This knob is attached to a flat wire, which runs through a kind of tunnel between the upper and lower

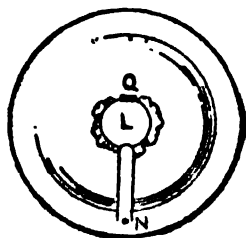


FIG. 34.

portions of the plate (Fig. 34), until it reaches the trap, which it overlaps by  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch; so that the very least movement on N causes the trap to fly wide open, and thus release the flowers. These, made of silk, are specially devised for conjuring purposes, and are known as spring flowers. Do not release the trap immediately the plate is covered; but, having covered the plate, hold the handkerchief up by its centre (tentwise), and *then* release trap—otherwise the audience may notice something fly quickly against the handkerchief, and at once suspect a trap.

## CONJURER'S PISTOL.

Unlike most firearms, a conjurer's pistol is perfectly harmless. Its weight is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ounces, its barrel is *perfectly solid*, and the ammunition is nothing more serious than percussion caps, which are usually sold in boxes of 100. The total length of this deadly weapon is 8 inches. The

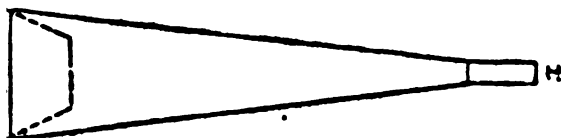


FIG. 35.

handle is made of wood, and the whole thing looks more like a schoolboy's toy than a piece of magical apparatus—indeed, there is nothing *magical* about the pistol at all. The whole point is, it is never used alone—that is to say, whenever it is employed, a specially constructed tube is used with it. This is given in detail in Fig. 35, from which the reader will notice that at the wide end T there is a kind of tin cup, which fits exactly into the tube. Both cup and tube being painted jet black, no one can possibly tell whether the cup is in the tube or not. The end H fits on to the nozzle of the pistol. These tubes vary considerably in size, according to the article to be disposed of. The most convenient size for palming is that indicated by the circle at Fig. 36. Suppose you wish to vanish a silk handkerchief, all you have to do is to pick up your pistol, with tube and fake complete: place

handkerchief (with left hand) into the fake, and keep this hand over same, as if to prevent the silk from escaping. Give a half turn to the right and fire pistol at whatever your target may chance to be; then place pistol on a table with right hand, and at the same moment "vest," or otherwise dispose of fake, which, of course, contains the handkerchief inside. Next, proceed to your bull's eye and bring forth the duplicate silk, which your audience will be kind enough to think is the identical one you fired a moment before from the pistol. The latter can now be freely examined.

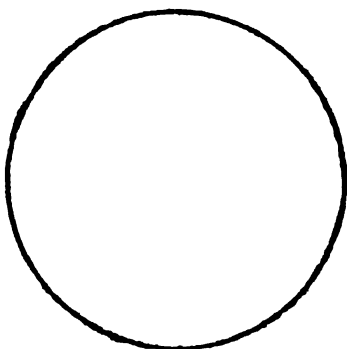


FIG. 36.

#### THE CARD TABLE.

Fig. 37 gives the reader a good idea of what is technically known as the "card table"—although "card pedestal" would perhaps convey a better idea of what the

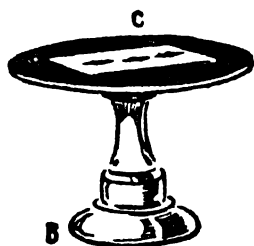


FIG. 37.

article is actually like. This piece of apparatus is made of tin; the exterior of the top and base being painted to represent brass, and further

embellished by circles of red and violet paint. The inside of the top is painted black; likewise that portion of the stand upon which the three of diamonds is shown in our illustration. The better-class "card tables" are generally nickel-plated throughout. When the cover is put upon the stand, the total height from A to B is 8 inches; the foot is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter; and the table portion C is

4½ inches across. Upon this fits, quite loosely, a circular piece of tin (also painted black), not quite 4½ inches in diameter. The lower portion of the cover, however, fits this disc very tightly, so that if the cover is thrust on to the disc with considerable pressure and again removed, the disc of tin comes away with it, and no one is any the wiser. To prepare for the presentation of this trick, you must have a duplicate of the card you intend to "force" placed in readiness (face upwards) upon the card table. Over the card put the disc of tin so that the card will not now be seen. Next "force" a card upon an onlooker, and then proceed to vanish the card by any method you think fit; but before doing so, remember to put the cover on the card table, and also be careful to press same *hard*—so that it will not fail to grip the disc of tin, which is the all-important part of the whole experiment. The card having gone at the word of command, remove cover and display the three of diamonds—or whatever else it may chance to be. Additional astonishment can be created by passing the lid for examination at the commencement of the trick, and the stand at the completion of same. The audience will then be satisfied that they were allowed to examine *everything*!

#### GLASS OF WATER FROM A HANDKERCHIEF.

Of production tricks this is perhaps quite one of the best. It is by no means new, but like wine and violins it seems to improve with age. The effect is this: The sleight-of-hand expert exhibits a large handkerchief back and front. He then throws it idly over his left arm; and upon picking same up again, from the centre thereof reveals the fact that a glass of clear water has by some means or other come into his hand. This deception is well worth anybody's while to practise; because the fact that the water can be consumed, and that "the tumbler is made of glass which is transparent on both sides," also that the trick is performed away from any table, chair, or other article of furniture, at once stamps the illusion and illusionist as being a "little out of the ordinary."

To perform this seeming impossibility, the first thing to be done is to have a special pocket made on the left side of your dress suit, with the mouth or opening cut like the

breast pockets in a Norfolk suit; moreover, the pocket should be lined with black satin. The next thing to acquire is an indiarubber cover, sold by all magical apparatus manufacturers, for the purpose of working this particular trick. The indiarubber cover fits over the glass of water so neatly, that the glass can be put into the aforesaid pocket without any fear whatever. The handkerchief is quite ordinary, except that it is large and (usually) patterned and highly coloured. Take hold of the handkerchief with the left hand at one corner, and the right hand at another corner; then proceed to throw it loosely over the left arm, and at the same time make a slight turn, so that your left arm is now full towards the audience. Under cover of the handkerchief, the right hand finds its way to the left breast pocket, and withdraws the glass of water—completely hidden by the handkerchief, beneath which the left hand then grips the bottom of the glass; whilst the right hand, in removing the handkerchief, at the same time takes away the indiarubber cover by pressing with the fingers on top of same, the thumb loosening that portion encircling the side of the tumbler. All is now over: The water is consumed, to prove its genuineness; and the indiarubber fake, under cover of handkerchief, cast on one side. This trick may be enlarged upon by finally causing the glass to vanish in mid-air; but for this extra effect you will require additional apparatus, which I will now describe. Buy two coloured handkerchiefs (exactly alike), of the style and pattern usually used by those who are ironically termed "working-men." These (the handkerchiefs, not the men) are often red, with a multitude of white spots; but the particular design is quite immaterial. To one of these handkerchiefs glue a piece of circular stout cardboard, corresponding to the dimensions of the top of the glass; then ask "Mary" to stitch the second handkerchief to the first (*i.e.*, all round the edges) so that it looks like one. Another requisite will be

#### A GOOD BLACK-ART TABLE.

This need not be expensive. They are usually made in the following manner (Fig. 38): The table-top is covered with a cloth made of black velvet, with an ornamental

stripes of some sort of embroidery. These stripes divide the table-top into nine divisions, one (or more) of which is a trap (or traps)—*i.e.*, an open well, lined with black

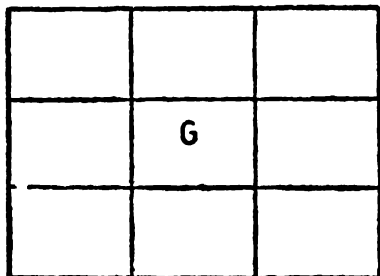


FIG. 38.

velvet; so that it is quite impossible to distinguish the division containing the well G from the other divisions, even at a distance of only a yard. It is a recognised principle in magic that black does not show on black. Now let us retrace our steps. Having produced the glass of

water, drink same (or otherwise dispose of the fluid), and then place the empty glass on your black-art table, in the square immediately in front of the open trap G; cover the tumbler with your faked handkerchief; so that the piece of cardboard comes directly over the top of the glass; place the fingers and thumb of left hand over handkerchief, and grasp the pasteboard disc, whilst the right hand finds its way underneath the handkerchief—presumably to take hold of the body of the glass, but in reality to drop same into the trap. Now walk forward towards the footlights (taking care to keep both hands engaged, as if still holding the tumbler); where you stop dead, and pretend to throw the glass at your audience, who will probably duck their heads and cry "Oh!" Shaking out the 'kerchief, you prove that the tumbler has gone beyond recall. Well, no, not quite "beyond recall," for if you have taken the precaution to load your tail pocket with a duplicate tumbler, this should now be produced; but if you intend to thus add to the effect, you must remember to wipe the first tumbler with a napkin before its disappearance, otherwise the second glass will appear too dry.

## BOWL OF GOLDFISH FROM A SHAWL.

Of all old-time conjuring tricks this is certainly one of the most successful. The effect is, that from a borrowed (or other) lady's shawl the performer produces a bowl of



goldfish : and then causes it to vanish as mysteriously as it arrived. To one who has already read the preceding section this deception will afford no difficulty whatever. As a matter of fact, it is worked in precisely the same way as the production and ultimate disappearance of a glass of water—a shawl being used in place of a handkerchief, in order to afford greater “cover” for the larger article. The indiarubber cover is of course larger than in the last case, and is shaped in keeping with the shallow bowl used for the trick. The fish are dummies. Those usually sold for this illusion are cut out of carrots ; and, I might add, generally persist in floating upside down on the surface of the water, in a most provoking manner. For this reason, the writer prefers to discard the silly fish altogether, and to content himself with merely the bowl of water—some of which latter he deliberately spills on the floor, as an indisputable proof of its *bonâ fides*. If the shawl has been borrowed, the wizard cannot very well do more than “produce” the bowl ; but if he uses a shawl of his own, or one belonging to his lady pianist, it may be a double one (like the handkerchiefs), and faked with a piece of cardboard, to correspond with the dimensions of the bowl top. If the magical entertainer intends to *vanish* the bowl, he must proceed to do so in the following manner : Carry the bowl to a central table, behind which is a servante (or shelf) ; place bowl upon the back portion of the table, and cover same with faked shawl (which latter should be of some very dark colour—or, better still, quite black). Now place left hand underneath the shawl and right hand above ; raise bowl, and whilst the right hand continues to hold the cardboard through the shawl (and thus to maintain the shape of the bowl), the left hand quietly drops the bowl on to the servante. The conjurer then walks to the front of the stage, as in the last case, and pretends to shy his production at the craniums of his unfortunate admirers. Needless to say, however, no one is seriously injured, the bowl having made good its escape long ago.

#### A BASKET OF FLOWERS.

There are two ways of working this elegant illusion ; but one only is known to magical apparatus manufac-

turers. The other is the invention of the author, and is now given to the conjuring fraternity for the first



FIG. 39.

time. The effect: A wire skeleton basket (Fig. 39 A) is covered with a flag; upon the latter being removed, the basket is seen to be full of most beautiful flowers (Fig. 39 B). Now for the *modus operandi*.

Fig. 40 is intended to represent the bottom of the basket; 1, 2, and 3 are the covers of the little traps,

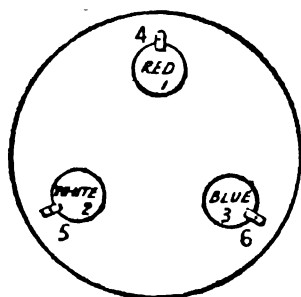


FIG. 40.

which are released by the button-catches 4, 5, 6, these being easily manipulated from the outside of the basket. The traps are loaded with "spring flowers" of various colours. An effective way is to load one trap with red flowers, another trap with blue flowers, and a third with white flowers (as indicated in the illustration). In such a case further effect may be obtained from the employment of a silk Union Jack flag, the red,

white, and blue of which may be thought to have something to do with the colours of the flowers! My own method is to have only one trap, in the centre of the basket, and to work it in precisely the same way as the soup-plate trick. The advantages of this method are that the entire bouquet is released at one time, and that the basket need not be made so large, which is a matter of considerable import to the performer who carries his own properties.

## THE CRYSTAL CASKET.

A casual perusal of any magical catalogue will reveal the fact that there are a great many different sorts of so-called "Crystal Caskets," varying in size and shape. As, however, they are all worked in practically the same way, it will suffice if I describe the construction of one class only. Fig. 41 A illustrates a crystal casket  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches square,

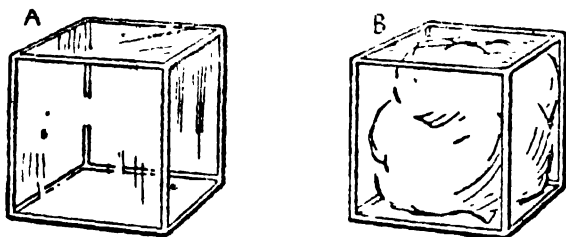


FIG. 41.

the top, bottom, and four sides of which are all made of glass. The whole thing is held together by a framework of brass  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in thickness. One of the sides (which shall be called the *back*, for the purpose of demonstrating) is on a hinge at the bottom, and at the top (inside) it has a tiny hook, which receives, and secures, a glass flap—also on a hinge. Between this flap and the true top of the casket there is adequate space for a small silk handkerchief. In order to prepare for the working of this trick, open the back of the casket; place, say, a magenta silk handkerchief between the flap and the true top of the box; shut the back, so that the hook of same will now prevent the flap from falling, and at the same time maintain the 'kerchief in position. By reason of the edging of brass, the silk will not be seen by the company, who are on a level with the casket; but if anyone should be standing up, or in any position in which he looks down upon the mystic's table, he will most certainly see more than he should. To be quite on the safe side, the best plan is to have a second magenta handkerchief, folded and lying loosely on top (*i.e.*, outside) of the casket. This, of course, can be seen, and will hide the other one lying snugly between the flap and true top, and of which

## CONJURING TRICKS

nobody is supposed to know anything at all. Pick up the casket and the handkerchief *together* with the right hand, remarking that "it is the identical crystal casket in which you received your freedom of the city of —" (here mention the place that you happen to be performing in, which, if a hamlet or village, should secure a laugh). Now borrow an ordinary Irish linen handkerchief from a member of the company, and with it cover the glass box. Having done this, you immediately pretend to have made a mistake, and say: "Oh, that won't do; I must have the magenta handkerchief." So saying, you lift up the borrowed handkerchief (without entirely removing it), and take away the magenta silk, which has been lying all the time outside the casket. This must be *vanished* in any of the authorised ways. Take hold of the casket together with borrowed handkerchief, and in the act of removing the latter open the back and bring same to the top. The fact of your having slightly opened the back will release the flap, which will fall, and with it the imprisoned magenta silk. Now return the borrowed article; show the handkerchief inside the casket (Fig. 41 B); and the deception will be complete. You may, however, remove the silk, and again vanish same by another method, if you care to do so.

### SWEETS FROM A HANDKERCHIEF.

This is the very trick to work at a party of young people; for children invariably appreciate really high-class confectionery. Moreover, there is nothing in the world which will more quickly bring a conjurer into favour with his audience than a neatly executed *distribution* trick.

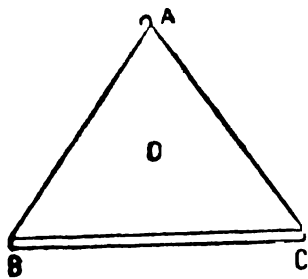


FIG. 42. ♀

The handkerchief from which the sweets are produced is a borrowed one, and is freely shown (both sides) before and after the deception. Fig. 42 is not intended to illustrate a

dunce's cap, nor a proposition in Euclid—it is nothing

more than the fake which is necessary for the performance of this illusion. It is made of white linen, at the apex of which (A) is a curved pin. At the base of the triangle (BC) are two pieces of thin flat wire or whalebone, such as I am told are worn by ladies in their corsets. D is fitted with "sugar and spice and all things nice," which cannot escape from the mouth of the triangular bag, owing to the presence of the wires either side of same. Thus loaded, the bag is put upon a servante at the back of magician's table; and the pin A is attached to the back edge of the table-cloth. Having borrowed a good-sized white handkerchief, place it on the table in such a way that the middle of it comes immediately over the bent pin A; then, in picking up the handkerchief again, possession is also gained of the sweets, which latter (as previously stated) will not fall out until pressure is brought to bear upon the sides of the bag (AB and AC). When this is done, however, a shower of good things takes place—to the delight of those present.

#### TEA VERSUS COFFEE.

In this enlightened age, it is perhaps rather a risky business to work tricks which depend for their success mainly upon a certain piece of apparatus being turned upside down. There are, fortunately, exceptions to every rule, and I am therefore of opinion that the transposition of tea and coffee (and *vice versa*) is a thing which may very well be introduced into a magical programme of to-day. The apparatus employed is "as old as the hills"; but the manner of utilising same is, I venture to think, now given to the conjuring world for the first time. The mode of procedure is as follows: There is a small table on either side of the stage; and upon each is seen a handsomely decorated canister,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches high by  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter. One of these is filled with tea leaves, and covered over by a flag; the other is filled with coffee beans, and also covered over by a flag. A single revolver shot, and the deed is done. Upon removing the respective lids, the canister which formerly contained tea leaves now holds the coffee beans; and the canister which previously held the coffee beans now contains the tea leaves! Need-

less to say, the introduction of a firearm is an innovation which may or may not be resorted to, according to the fancy of the operator. I suggest its use on the stage only—certainly not in Lord Tom Noddy's private drawing-room.

Fig. 43, and the following particulars, will, I hope, make everything quite clear. L O M N is a cylinder,

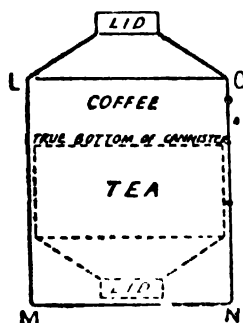


FIG. 43.

open at either end, and through which the inner portion can easily slide up or down, so that the tea or coffee can be brought to the top by merely turning the whole thing turtle. In order to work the trick, you must fill one half of a canister with tea, and the other half with coffee. The second canister must be treated in the same way; but each must be left on your table in such a way that in one case the tea is uppermost, and in the other the coffee occupies this position. Turn out the contents of each canister before the eyes of the audience, in order that they may see everything is quite *au fait*. Now return leaves and beans to their respective canisters, and put the lids on—being careful, however, to hold the canisters *off* the table with left hand, whilst covering them (with silk flags) with the right; then, in replacing them upon the table, *each* canister is deliberately turned upside down (under cover of the flags), so that upon the lids being once more removed it appears that the tea leaves and coffee beans have, for some reason best known to themselves, undertaken to change places.

## TRAVELLING EGG.

In order to work this particular sleight, you will require a prepared glass, an egg (which may or may not be prepared), and an ordinary handkerchief. This may be borrowed. Picking up a tumbler from his table, the wizard points out that "it is the very transparency of the glass which makes it so opaque!" Then he takes an egg, remarking as he does so: "There is an old adage, you

know, which says, 'An egg without a moustache is like a kiss without salt.' Ah, talking to eggs (talking of eggs—I beg your pardon), that reminds me, my landlady gave me three eggs for breakfast this morning and only one of them was good; that was really 2 (too) bad!" Placing the egg inside the tumbler (which latter is held in the left hand), cover them both with a handkerchief—which you explain is done "so that the company may have a clear view of the glass!" Ask a volunteer to step forward and hold egg, handkerchief, and glass securely. This done, make certain passes over and under the tumbler with a magic wand; take glass from assistant; remove the handkerchief; and, to the unbounded astonishment of every spectator, the ovum has departed, and is found behind the magician's knee, or under his elbow, or in fact almost anywhere, as his fancy may dictate.

This trick is quite easy to work; lends itself to unlimited patter, and usually takes well with almost any sort of audience. The glass is specially made for the purpose. It has all the appearance of being genuine; yet would not hold water, owing to the fact that it is bottomless. The egg may be an ordinary hen's egg (in which case it, should be hard-boiled, in case of accident), or made of wood, cork, china, ivory, or celluloid; but whatever the composition, an exact duplicate of it must be secured in an "egg-holder" (Fig. 44), and fastened by the safety-pin thereof to the back portion of the prestidigitator's waistcoat. This done, all things are now ready. The left hand

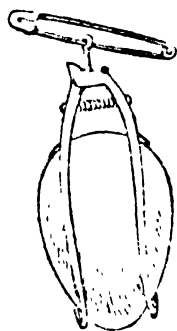


FIG. 44.

holds the glass at the bottom, and the right hand places an egg into the tumbler, making it knock against the side of same, in order to induce the company to imagine that the ovum has struck the *bottom* of the glass. In the act of covering the glass with the borrowed 'kerchief the left hand "palms" the egg, and "vests" or otherwise disposes of it, whilst the attention of the audience is being centred upon the gentleman who, "being a British subject, does not mind coming to the front!" The passes

having been made, take the glass from volunteer and remove the borrowed handkerchief. Turning towards table (left side to audience) to put down the glass, the right hand gets possession of the egg, and, extracting it from the holder, palms it in the right hand, where it remains until finally *discovered* at the back of the knee, under the elbow, or in any other unlikely place.

#### TO PASS A PENNY THROUGH A GLASS OF WATER.

In long conjuring programmes it is perfectly useless to expect every item to be of equal standard, and there must obviously be some tricks which are not quite "22 carat"—these are more or less resorted to as time-killers. The one about to be described is not exactly "hall-marked," but at the same time many people have not seen it worked—and, provided the manipulation is good, there is no reason why the deception should not appeal to a certain number of spectators. A twelfth part of a shilling is borrowed, and marked (with a pin or penknife, so as to be easily recognized again); covered by a handkerchief (which may also be borrowed), and held over a glass of Adam's ale. At a given signal, the coin is permitted to drop into the glass of water; the aqua is poured away and the "copper" ultimately found in the most unlikely or impossible place. The glass sold by magic merchants for the performance of this apparent miracle is, as a rule, coloured, and has a perfectly flat bottom. A disc of glass the exact size of a penny is also sold with the tumbler. This circle of glass fits the bottom of the tumbler perfectly, and will adhere thereto when moistened by water. Having borrowed the necessary coin, the exponent of modern magic adroitly exchanges it (under cover of pocket-handkerchief) for the already palmed piece of glass, and palms the penny instead, in his left hand—at the same time holding a glass of water with that hand. The disc, now under cover of the 'kerchief, is held over the tumbler of water by a member of the company, who naturally supposes that he holds a penny, and, indeed, there is no reason why he should think otherwise, for has not the magical expert given his word of honour that "he wouldn't deceive them for the world"! At the given



sign the helper lets go of the would-be coin, which immediately falls into the glass of liquid, where it is naturally expected to be found; but, to the bewilderment of the uninitiated it has miraculously vanished. The reason why has already been fully explained, and it is not difficult to see how the original coin (which the entertainer has had palmed in his left hand the whole time) can now be made to appear from the assistant's nose or hair.

### DYEING HANDKERCHIEF.

**EFFECT.**—The magician holds in his hand a pink silk handkerchief, which is exhibited both sides. He then proceeds to pass this through the semi-clenched fist of one hand; and, withdrawing it by the first finger and thumb of the other hand, it is seen to have changed its colour completely, for it is now a dark navy blue. It is again freely shown back and front, in order to *prove* that only one piece of silk is used during the whole experiment. This is worked in much the same way as the universal "Dyeing Handkerchiefs," in which case three white pieces of silk are passed through a roll of white paper, and are brought out the other end coloured. But in the present trick no paper is used, and the audience are only allowed to see one 'kerchief at a time. They know nothing of the existence of a fake, which, by the way, is the very soul of the deception. This I will now describe. The fake consists of a small, circular, thin cardboard tube, open at either end,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches long with one inch diameter. This is divided by a piece of black tape ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide), which is attached and glued to the sides, and is of such length as to permit of the middle of the tape just reaching to either end of the tube. To this piece of tape is sewn a pink handkerchief on the one side, and a dark navy blue on the other. These are sewn at their centres, and with silk thread, corresponding in colour to the respective handkerchiefs. The pink silk is allowed to entirely protrude from the cardboard tube, which latter hangs down at the back of the wizard's table and contains the



FIG. 45.

blue silk. It will therefore be seen that in the perfectly simple and natural act of picking up the pink silk, possession of tube and blue handkerchief is at once obtained, and hidden from view by the closed right hand, which now holds them whilst the left hand takes hold of another corner, so as to exhibit the handkerchief well spread out. This done, the fake is held by the semi-clenched fist of whichever hand the performer finds most convenient to himself, whilst the disengaged hand proceeds cautiously to push the pink silk into the fake, and thus effectually eject the dark blue from the other end. Some performers purposely permit part of the one colour to be seen before all the other is lost to view, with the idea of impressing upon the company that the process of dyeing is both gradual and sure. I, however, am of the opinion that most of the audience would, under such conditions, guess that two handkerchiefs were used; whereas if the silk is not produced at all until the other has entirely disappeared from view, they are apt to go away saying—"Well, really, that beats all creation!" Let me impress upon the reader that this is by no means a difficult sleight; but at the same time it is one which requires a great deal of care, because once the fake is caught sight of the show is completely given away. There can, however, be no excuse for such an accident, as the fake is small and light, easily handled, and has at least one silk to cover it almost throughout the entire illusion. Fig. 45 gives a rough idea of the cardboard tube, tape, and position of the two silk handkerchiefs. I need hardly add that the colours can be according to one's own fancy; but it is a good plan to get decided contrasts, such as those already given—or, say, light yellow and dark red.

#### THE VANISHING PENNY.

This experiment might very well be arranged to follow the "Penny Through a Glass of Water," but it may also be worked by itself, as a separate item in the programme. Fortunately this little trick has all the appearance of being dependent upon pure sleight-of-hand for its success; though, as a matter of fact, very little legerdemain is required.

A certain amount of preparation, however, is certainly necessary. Buy a large handkerchief (such as is usually used by men of the humbler classes). Then get a penny with a hole in it, or drill one for yourself, and with strong thread (of the same colour as the handkerchief) and needle sew the penny to the middle of the cloth. Everything is now in order, and the deception is worked in the manner following: From off your table take a handkerchief and spread it out for inspection, but remember to show one side only, as the other side will "let the cat out of the bag." Borrow a penny from a member of the company, place same under the handkerchief, and then hold it (through the handkerchief). Now invite one of the audience to come forward and render "first aid." Jones does so, and takes hold of the penny which is still covered by the handkerchief. Two corners of the same are now gripped by Mr. Magic-man, who says—"One, two, three, go!"—And at the word "go" the highly coloured handkerchief is drawn smartly away from the assistant's hand and the penny is discovered elsewhere. The coin which was borrowed is palmed, and that which the assistant holds is not the borrowed one at all, but the penny which was previously sewn to the middle of the handkerchief. Whilst you are directing the amateur as to how the properties must be held (e.g. "A little higher please"—"No, not quite so low as that," etc.), the left hand, in which the borrowed coin is palmed, quietly makes its way to the *profonde* (a large pocket lined with buckram, situated inside each coat-tail, and generally about 6½ inches square), where the cash is deposited. Through the medium of secret pockets a penny can be produced from almost any impossible place; but as the date of the trick one is not likely to be the same as that of the borrowed one, it is safest to wait until the end of the entertainment before returning the loan—by which time possession of the borrowed copper can be gained. If preferred, the conjurer may use his own money throughout, in which case a coin of duplicated date can easily be arranged. In the event of this latter course being adopted, considerable fun can be excited by the introduction of some sort of trick purse—viz., those that prick the person opening them;

those that open by merely being blown upon ; those that are made like a stocking ; those that, when fully expanded, are more than a yard in length, et cetera. This sleight is certainly not to be despised. On one occasion after I had worked it in a show, I overheard a lady say, " That trick with the penny was very clever ! "

#### VANISHING GLASS OF STOUT.

To those who are looking for something really good, and quite inexpensive, I venture to suggest that a " Vanishing Glass of Stout " cannot be beaten. Moreover, it is fairly new, and has not yet been worked to death. Fig. 46 (1)

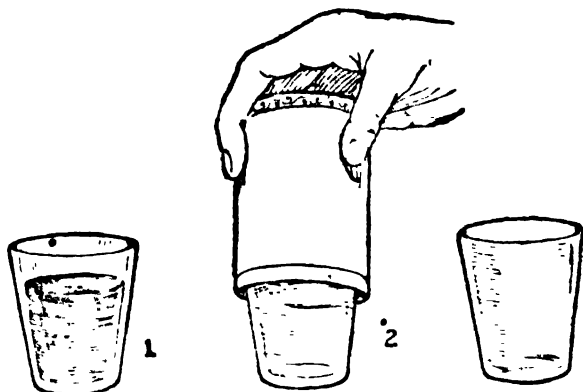


FIG. 46.

illustrates a glass almost full of stout ; Fig. 46 (2) shows a circular cardboard cover being placed over the glass of stout ; and Fig. 46 (3) conveys the idea that, upon the said cover being removed, the liquid has gone. No better effect. The secret lies in the fact that there is a celluloid lining to the tumbler which is practically invisible from the auditorium. In this trick, everything depends upon the manner in which it is presented. The following is undoubtedly the neatest, cleanest, and best method : On your table have the tumbler (which is 4 inches high by 3 inches diameter at the top) ; and close handy have the cardboard cover (which is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, and of adequate circumference to permit of its encircling the glass com-

fortably), with the fake inside. Pick up the tumbler, turn it upside down, and give its end a gentle tap with your wand, to convince the audience that you are not working with a trick-tumbler. Now pick up the pretty cover (which is decorated with gold or silver fancy paper outside, and painted jet black inside), and the fake also. This is done by inserting the 1st and 2nd fingers inside the tube, whilst the thumb, 3rd and 4th fingers of the right hand remain outside. Saying—"I have here a cover, which, as you will observe, is constructed in such a manner as to exactly fit the glass" (suited the action to the words), put the cover over the tumbler, leave the fake inside the glass, and, withdrawing the cover once again, point out to the company that "it is rather like a sponge—full of holes; in fact, like a good many of us, it is more holy than righteous." Next place cover down on table, unscrew bottle of stout, pour some of the contents thereof into the now faked glass, and cover the liquid with the cardboard tube. Now remove same again, but this time take the fake too. With the left hand draw attention to the fact that the tumbler is now only full of emptiness; whilst the right hand carefully drops the stout and fake into a waterproof bag, which is in readiness at the back of your table. The cover and glass can now be passed round for examination. It will readily be seen that this apparatus can be used in a variety of ways. If a black-art table is resorted to the trick can be utilised for vanishing an egg or handkerchief; in which case such articles, together with the fake, would be dropped into the open trap of the table, under cover of the cardboard tube.

#### A USEFUL SERVANTE.

When I knew less about magic than I do now, I once saw a conjurer produce ribbons, flags, etc., from a borrowed hard felt hat. I was well aware of the fact that some magicians loaded their hats from the back of a table, and that others loaded them from chair-backs—but the particular wizard in question did not bend to such sordid things as tables or chairs; he merely advanced to the footlights, borrowed an unprepared hat, and, without

turning his back or going near any furniture or apparatus, immediately produced his strange goods. This completely

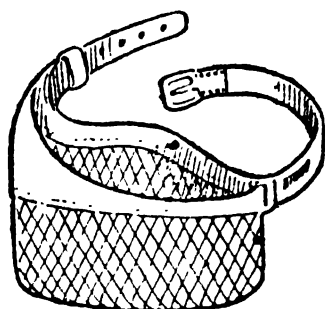


FIG. 47.

baffled me at the time; but now I am in a position to tell you exactly how the inexhaustible hat trick was worked.

Underneath the performer's vest (or waistcoat, as it used to be called) was a subtle arrangement similar to Fig. 47, consisting of a network bag attached to a metal support, and having leather straps, which fix at the back by a buckle. The network bag ac-

commodates the load, which is ultimately introduced into the hat by the right hand—whilst the left hand holds the brim of the hat. This vest servante (as it is called) is extremely useful for many purposes (*e.g.*, vanishing cards, billiard balls, eggs, handkerchiefs, etc.); but it is not particularly comfortable to wear.

## A FLAG AND SOME HOT COFFEE.

Here is a trick which will involve a little care in its preparation, but the effect is so amazing, that you will not regret the trouble taken. Mr. Showman draws the attention of the audience to a coffee-pot which stands upon a tray, together with a few cups, saucers, and spoons. He pours out hot coffee from the pot into the cups, which are then handed round to members of the company, and the tray and coffee-pot are returned "with many thanks." A nickel-plated flagstaff (from which is suspended "the colours which never run") is now brought forward, and held by the magical expert immediately in front of the coffee-pot. "Achebazooka!"—and, lo! the flag has eloped from the staff, like a flash of extra smart lightning. The performer goes to the pot, from which a few moments before hot coffee was poured, and upon opening the lid he triumphantly brings forth "the grand old flag," as dry as a bone—to the strains of "Rule, Britannia" (Fig. 48). Personally, I cannot conceive a more satisfactory illusion.

It is pretty, showy, and patriotic ; moreover, if you have plenty of money, and wish for additional effect, you can buy an electro-plated coffee-pot, and stand it upon a solid silver tray. But now to explain the mystery.

To begin with, one need hardly venture to point out that two Union Jacks are used. One rests in a kind of metal pocket, which fits inside the top of the coffee-pot, as indicated by the dots H, Fig. 48, and therefore cannot possibly get wet, owing to the coffee having been previously poured into the lower portion of the pot. The other flag is attached to a rod inside the flagstaff, and works upon the same principle as modern roller blinds. It is drawn down to



FIG. 48.

its full length before the curtain rises, and upon the man of magic pressing a small catch (which is not seen by the audience), the silk rapidly flies upwards and is snugly inside the staff before you can say "Jack Robinson." A vacuum flask will be found handy for keeping the coffee hot for any length of time, and it should not be poured into the pot until the last moment ; but once in the pot the flag-fake will help to keep it quite hot. This is a really tip-top deception.

### A SHILLING IN A BALL OF WOOL.

I am quite prepared to admit that vanishing a shilling, and ultimately finding it in the centre of a ball of coloured worsted, is no new trick ; but every conjurer I have seen who worked it at all, worked it in the old way, which, I believe, is the only method that has as yet been published. I am tempted, however, to include this time-honoured trick here, because I have new light to throw upon it—viz., my own method.

In case any of my readers do not happen to know the ancient way of working this homely deception, I will, first of all, give the old method, and then Crayford's, and

the novice can so judge for himself which he likes the better.

OLD WAY.—Procure a thin flat piece of tin tubing, sufficiently wide for a shilling to slip through it easily. At one end of this wind an ounce of coloured worsted (any colour you may fancy); place this on the servante at the back of your table, or keep it in readiness behind a screen. Having borrowed a "bob," take an early opportunity to

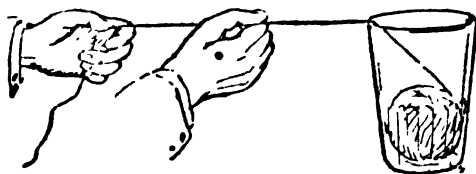


FIG. 49.

slip it inside the tin tube; which latter then remove, and bring forth the apparently unprepared ball of worsted. Place this in a tumbler

"made of glass, which is transparent on *both* sides," and ask a friend to hold it. You next proceed to vanish a shilling of your own, and this can be done by any method you like. Now ask somebody to unwind the worsted; and upon their doing so, the borrowed shilling is heard to clink against the glass. I remember, as a small schoolboy, a lady conjurer coming to our school to give a magical performance. She worked this illusion; but got her husband (a soloist), who was sitting at a small table by the side of her central table, to load the worsted, whilst she diverted our attention by coming to the front of the stage and telling amusing stories! So much, then for the old method—my great objection to which is, that the ball of worsted must be out of sight until after the borrowed shilling has been procured. We haven't all got a husband handy to push the coin through a piece of tin tubing for us; and to go behind a screen without any stronger reason than to fetch a ball of worsted, naturally suggests the question—"Why in the world wasn't the worsted on his table, to begin with?" To have the faked worsted on your table servante, and to fidget about with a borrowed piece of silver, *without looking at your hands*, is bound to lead to a certain amount of fumbling for which there appears no excuse.



**NEW WAY.**—The undoubted improvement of my own method mainly lies in the fact that the worsted is in full view at the commencement of the entertainment and never once goes out of sight—no screen, servante, nor confederate being necessary. Proceed as follows: Buy an ounce of worsted (not too thin, Berlin is best), and wind it around a shilling, so that when fully rolled it makes a fair-sized ball. Place this on your table, have a big glass also in readiness, and you are then fully equipped for the job. Place the worsted in the tumbler, and ask someone to hold it; borrow a shilling, and vanish it by the "French drop" (which will be described in the next section); get a member of the company to unwind the worsted, and when you hear the coin chink against the glass, take it out yourself, put it on a little tray, and hand it back in style to its lawful owner. The secret lies in the fact that after vanishing the shilling (into a secret pocket), you show your hands empty; but whilst all eyes watch the couple who hold the glass and unwind the worsted, you seize the admirable opportunity thus afforded of regaining possession of the vanished coin, which you *palm* in the left hand. When you hear the shilling in the glass, you promptly put your *right* hand into the tumbler, thus gaining the shilling inserted in the worsted before the "early doors" are open. Return to your table, ostensibly to fetch a miniature tray, in order to return the coin with increased grace, and place upon it, not the shilling which you really took out of the glass, but the borrowed one, which has been snugly lying in your left palm, unknown to the company. As, however, the audience are not aware of the existence of a second shilling, and as the one handed back to its owner is undoubtedly the marked coin originally proffered, they naturally imagine only one "bob" was used—and are greatly troubled in mind to know how it got inside the ball of worsted. As to the duplicate shilling, this is now in your right hand underneath the tray, and is hidden by it, and may easily be placed upon your table in the act of returning the tray to its place, without fear of detection. But in keeping with my promise, and in order that you may be successful, I will now explain—

## THE "FRENCH DROP,"

otherwise known as "Le Tourniquet," which literally means turnstile (or swivel). This is a piece of pure sleight-of-hand, but at the same time quite simple; in fact, so easy is it that unless the student possesses sufficient dexterity to acquire it, I fear he cannot hope to ever make his mark as a prestidigitator. Take a coin between the thumb and first finger of the left hand; then pretend to take it in the right hand, by passing the right thumb *underneath* and all the right fingers *over* it. Now close the right hand (as if it contained money), and at the same moment allow the coin to fall into the palm of the left hand. Open the right hand, to prove that the money is not there; and whilst thus engaging the attention of your audience, the left hand cunningly slips the coin into a secret pocket, where it remains until called for—thus the left hand can now be shown freely, back and front. This, then, is the "French drop"; and if practised daily for a quarter of an hour, with every coin of the realm, for a month, you will then be able to attempt it in public. You can also then start doing the same sleight with small eggs (made of cork), and billiard balls (made of wood or ivory). "Le Tourniquet" is extremely useful for a vast number of deceptions, and is therefore, practically speaking, indispensable. Learn, therefore, to do it with artistic grace and ease.

## THE BRAN CYLINDER.

Here is a "bran new" trick, invented, I believe, by Mr. Gilbert Stout. A daintily painted cylinder (10 inches high by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter) is proved to be empty—the lid being removed, and the audience allowed to see the bottom of the cylinder inside. Fill the cylinder with bran; place on the lid; fire a revolver (or a few passes with your mystic wand will do just as well); and upon opening the cylinder again, a number of oddments are produced—which, by reason of their size and bulk, would lead one to suppose that they completely filled the cylinder. Such, however, is not the case; as is proved by the fact that the conjurer finally turns out the same quantity of bran as was first put in; and then, removing the

bottom, passes it, the lid also, round for examination. This circular tin box (for such it is) has really two lids—one at the top and the other at the bottom; and as they are both exactly alike, no one can tell whether the cylinder is standing on its head or its heels. As is usually the case, there is a fake, unseen and unknown to the onlookers. This is illustrated in Fig. 50. A is a flat circular disc of tin, which, being left white on one side, cannot be distinguished from the true bottom of the cylinder; B is a thin layer of lead,



FIG. 50.

which is soldered on to A; and C is a small metallic ring, affixed to B. To prepare for the successful presentation of this little-known deception, procure a large silk flag, and sew a corner of it to the ring C. In this flag wrap spring flowers, a coil of paper ribbon (as usually sold for the tambourine trick), silk handkerchiefs, or anything-else that is small and collapsible. Now place the faked fake at the bottom of the cylinder, with the bright side (A) uppermost—so that anyone looking into the “cylindrical cylindrical cylinder” naturally thinks he sees the bottom of it. You cannot actually turn the cylinder upside down when empty, as the fake would then fall out, and completely “give the show away”; but you can safely turn it to an angle of, say, 35 degrees, for under such circumstances the fake (which you will remember is weighted) cannot tumble out. But additional protection against such an accident is afforded by holding the cylinder at the bottom with both hands, and gently pressing against the sides. Having now *proved* the cylinder to be empty, you proceed to fill it with bran, and then place on the lid. All this should be done in the front of your stage (or platform); so that in picking up the cylinder to carry it to your central table, an opportunity is afforded for turning the whole concern upside down. Placing it somewhat *heavily* in a suitable position, the bran sinks a little; thus, when the top is removed, the fake and strange articles are well below the edge of the cylinder, and therefore not observed by the company. After producing a quantity of unexpected things from the tin box, you finally bring out the

large flag; and, under cover of it, the fake to which it is attached. In the act of replacing the lid, you pretend to hear a murmur about the bran. "Oh, I see what you mean, sir. Where's the bran?" you ask. "Why, of course, still in the same place. I wouldn't deceive you for the world!" With these few words, you tip out the bran into a bag, or on to a piece of newspaper, and then hand cylinder and both lids for scrutiny.

### DRY SAND FROM WET WATER.

That conjurers copy from one another is a fact beyond dispute. Here is a trick which was originally performed only by the Hindu Fakirs, who thought so well of it that they decided to keep the idea to themselves. But, alas! the secret leaked out; and now I am able to give a new version (which is a vast improvement) of this very interesting and, I may say, fascinating illusion. The effect of

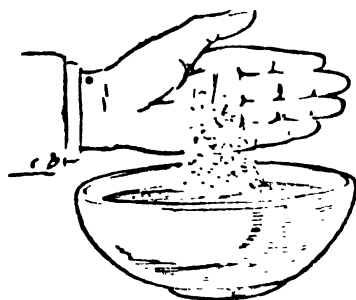


FIG. 51.

the old deception was simply that dry sand was placed into an ordinary basin, water poured on to it, and then the sand was reproduced perfectly dry, as in Fig. 51. The improvement consists in the fact that red, white, and blue sands are put into a basin, and whichever colour the audience like to call for is immediately produced by the wizard, even

though it has been saturated with water. The performer can have his sleeves rolled up to the elbow if desired. Water from any source will do equally well. A large glass receptacle can be substituted for the basin, if you specially wish to heighten the effect. And then two ordinary hands is all that is needed—with the exception of the sand, which, I may state, is faked; although to look at it you would hardly think so. The sand is rendered impervious to moisture, by reason of the particular method by which it is prepared. This I shall proceed to describe. Take some sand from the seashore, and

wash it thoroughly several times in hot water. Next secure a perfectly clean frying-pan (a new one is best), and a good steady fire. Having already dried the sand by the sun, place it in the frying-pan, with a lump of pure hog's lard about the size of a Victoria plum. The sand absorbs the grease, thus making it impervious to water, although the naked eye cannot possibly detect any preparation or trickery about these millions of grains, each of which has a minute particle of lard in it. As, however, any magical *depôt* can sell you the real thing, I do not suggest that you bother about preparing your own sand. The colours (red and blue) are, of course, due to the judicious use of appropriate and suitable dyes. Red, white, and blue sand are put up in little tissue paper bags, together with a small piece of cork each. Have three little tins—one for white sand, another for red sand, and a third for blue sand. At the bottom of each tin place some of the prepared sand, and above it some which is not prepared. Hand round the tins for examination, and then proceed to tilt a little of each kind of sand into the basin. Next pour on the water, and mix it all up together, so that the general effect is rather like somebody's blue-black writing fluid! "Oh, we had better use it all." So saying, you tip the rest of the red, white, and blue sand into the basin, and the little bags of prepared sand float on the surface, by reason of their respective corks; which latter the company cannot perceive, owing to the extremely inky nature of the tricoloured mess in the basin. It will now be an easy matter to pick up, and break, either the blue bag, or red bag, or white bag, according to whichever colour the audience want—the colour of the tissue paper, of course, corresponding to the colour of the sand within. The disused paper can be returned (in the palm) to the basin whilst in the act of picking out the next selected colour. Tricks with liquids are always of a more or less messy nature, but the effect of this one is most decidedly good.

#### HANDKERCHIEF TO SNAKE.

If you wish to be "down to date" in the way of handkerchief sleights, you must throw a silk handkerchief up

in the air, and cause it to transform itself into a real live snake. This effect can easily be brought about provided you purchase the necessary snake, which is made of coloured linen, and has a spiral spring running the whole extent of its middle—i.e., from head to tail. Fig. 52 shows the venomous reptile in detail. A is a metal ring, to which is attached a silk handkerchief; B is a short circular piece of wood in the cobra's unfortunate tail, the lower portion of which is attached to the linen skin and spiral spring within it; C is

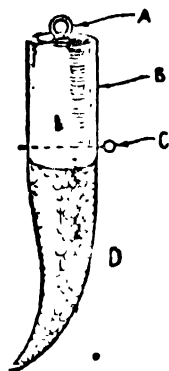


FIG. 52.

a little wire skewer, which goes through a hole in the wood (as indicated by the dotted line), and thus keeps Mr. Snake severely compressed (D) until his "turn" arrives. The ring (A) should be sewn to the centre of a rather deep-coloured handkerchief, of sufficient proportions to completely cover the snake, which latter should be picked up with both hands (it being too large and bulky to palm). Then start "te"ing the tale" about your Uncle Fred, who recently brought you a Cyprus silk handkerchief from India," etc., etc. Pull out skewer (C) with right hand, pocket it, and throw snake in air with left hand, when the obliging reptile will very kindly swallow the 'kerchief, without fear of indigestion. You can now add a little fun to the situation by powdering the cobra with some insect powder! To regain possession of the silk, push up the piece of wood (which is inside the tail) through the snake's mouth, withdraw handkerchief, replace skewer, and the creature is again ready to go through its startling and mysterious performance.

## A VANISHING CARD.

This, I believe, is quite the latest thing out in the shape of a card vanish; and having worked it myself with considerable success, I heartily recommend the sleight to every confrère. In effect a card is covered by a handkerchief and held over a large tumbler of water. It is then actually dropped into the water, and the handkerchief

removed—but the card has gone! Personally I prefer to use a silk flag, and to have the card held over a jug (Fig. 53). The effect is, of course, the same; but it looks a bit more important so worked; for it must ever be the ambition of the true magician to make as much of his tricks as possible, and not to leave out anything which is the least likely to help the audience to think more highly of the deception than they otherwise would have done. The explanation is as follows: Unknown to anyone but yourself, you have in your possession a piece of transparent celluloid, which must be in some place quite handy and easily get-at-able. This should be the exact size of a playing card. Having "forced" a card upon a member of the audience, you invite a boy to come and assist you. John Jones does not mind coming to the front. Hand him a glass jug (containing water) and ask him to hold it by the handle. Now take the selected card in one hand, and a flag in the other; cover the card with the flag, and get your young friend to hold the same immediately over the mouth of the jug, whilst the flag forms a convenient cover for card, jug, and water. "Please drop the card into the water when I say one, two, three—go!" Your commands are obeyed to the very letter. Nevertheless, upon removing the silk, the card has completely disappeared; and may, or may not, be produced elsewhere, as discretion dictates. What really happened was this. Under cover of the flag, you substituted the celluloid for the card, which latter you palmed and pocketed. The first time I worked this sleight in public I inadvertently left the piece of celluloid in the jug too long; and, whilst packing my Gladstone, a hall porter came into my dressing-room, and took possession of the jug and water. I have not seen the fake since! N.B.—The celluloid, being transparent, is completely hidden in a glass jug of water, or tumbler, as the case may be.

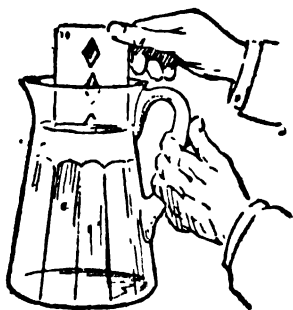


FIG. 53.

## VANISHING GLOVES.

It is half the battle won if you can make a good beginning in your magical entertainment. I am old-fashioned enough to think that the gloves which go where they are told make a very suitable and impressive introduction. Moreover, the trick can be made at home, with a pair of gloves which you are in the habit of wearing—or the whole thing can be purchased at any magical dépôt for less than a florin. The effect is as follows: The performer appears wearing white evening gloves, which he proceeds to remove, whilst making his introductory speech. As he takes his gloves off, however, they at once disappear—in a most bewildering manner. The late R. D. Chater, in "Hercat's Conjuring" (pages 80, 81, 82), has already given away two methods by which this impossibility can be worked: but I think the beginner will find the following much easier. To begin with, the gloves should be of white cotton, and fit easily. To the middle of the front portion, nearest the wrist, sew a piece of thin elastic (this should be one foot in length and covered with silk thread), at the free end of which make a loop, and pass it over a strong safety-pin, which latter fix securely to the inside of your coat sleeve, in such a manner that when the gloves have vanished the tips of the fingers of the gloves are at least two or three inches up the coat sleeve, and therefore well out of sight.

## A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.

In conjunction with the foregoing deception I think it well to make a variation from the old well-worn method. Having got rid of one glove (as already explained), make the other one change from white to black, which you can explain to your audience is—"A little study in black and white—and a very favourite brand of mine!" As a matter of fact, two gloves are employed—a black and a white. These are neatly sewn together, the one inside the other, fingers to fingers, thumb to thumb, and palm to palm. At the wrist a strong, stout piece of wire is secured between the two gloves, thus maintaining an opening which can be held firmly without fear of the gloves collapsing. To work



this tricky little sleight, hold the glove up (white one outside) in your right hand by the ring, so that the audience can see quite distinctly that it is white. Now raise your left hand, and allow the palm of same to grip the wire ring, which is thus drawn *downwards* whilst in the act of simply stroking the glove. At the same moment the right hand obtains possession of the inner portion, which, being pulled *upwards*, at once reveals the black glove, and conveys the impression that by a mere stroke of the wizard's mystic hand a white glove has verily and indeed changed to black in an inexplicable fashion. It is by no means easy to explain this on paper, but it is simple of manipulation.

#### GREEN VERSUS RED HANDKERCHIEF.

This charming sleight is one which I think so highly of that I almost invariably include it in my programme. It is worked in much the same way as the preceding illusion. Upon holding up a green silk, the magical entertainer explains that "the handkerchief is not so green as it looks." He gives it a gentle stroke, and the audience notice that the silk is no longer green, but royal red! Fig. 54 explains at a glance the apparatus complete (which can be purchased for half a crown). The dotted lines indicate a *folded* red handkerchief, which is sewn to a metal ring at the top, and by one stitch only to the centre of the green, as indicated by X. The said stitch can be of either red or green silk thread, as in either case it will not be noticed a few yards off. The top of the green handkerchief is also sewn to the metal ring, which latter should be about the size of a shilling. The little bit of red silk which is protruding through the ring hangs down at the back of your table, and when picking up the handkerchief you take the precaution to cover the front of it with the thumb of your right hand, the fingers being of course at the back portion. Your left hand now pretends to merely stroke the green handkerchief; but in reality gains possession of the ring, which is drawn downwards,

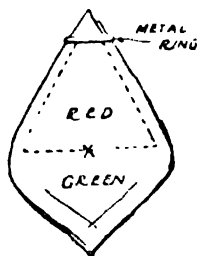


FIG. 54.

thus revealing the red silk. This is a new trick, inexpensive and most effective.

## A NOVEL PRODUCTION.

That the production of a bowl of gold-fish from a cloth is distinctly frayed at the edges, is a fact beyond dispute; but a refreshing innovation is to be found in the production of a flower in a pot, which may be followed by the appearance of a saucer. If the potted flower is produced as an opening trick, it may be stood upon the top of an ordinary pedestal, and serve as an ornament for the stage or drawing-room. The saucer business is merely one of those little

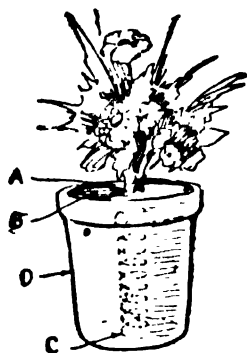


FIG. 55.

embellishments which go to make up the "good conjurer," and at once distinguish him from the "everyday magician." The flowers used in this deception are made of feathers, and suitably dyed to represent blossoms and leaves. They are attached to a piece of wood, which is hinged at A (Fig. 55), and affixed to a small spring fastened to the top of the flower-pot at B. The portion B is made of wood, and is covered on the top with artificial moss. From the underneath side of B a spiral spring runs down to the bottom of the pot,

where it is again fastened at C (also made of wood). D is white calico, painted to represent the real thing. It will therefore be seen that this seemingly impossible article can easily be folded almost flat, and thus pocketed. Prior to production, the flowers are pressed down from the perpendicular to the horizontal through the medium of the hinge (A); and are kept in that position by the sides of the performer's breast pocket. The flowers, however, immediately fly to the upright position (when released from ambuscade), by reason of the spring at top of pot (B). Fig. 56 illustrates the bottom of the pot, when the latter is collapsed. E is a stud, attached to the lower portion of B. The pot, on being compressed, brings E to a hole in the bottom of pot, and it is then pushed along a slot

cut out of tin (F)—thus keeping the entire apparatus sufficiently flat to fit in one's left breast pocket, from which it is reproduced, under cover of a flag, shawl, tea-cloth, or large handkerchief. Turn your left side towards the audience, throw the flag (or whatever it may be) over your left arm, which latter is a little bit raised. Grip flower and pot with your right hand, thus extracting same from your pocket; and, whilst still under cover, slip the bottom of pot on one side, so that the stud (E) slides along the slot (F) to the aperture (G), when the bottom of pot falls to its natural position by reason of the aforesaid spiral spring.

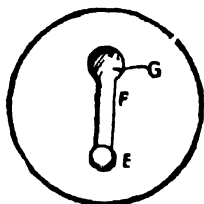


FIG. 56.

### DISAPPEARING CARDS.

Almost all men like to see card tricks—provided that they are well manipulated. It is, therefore, a good plan to have a fair stock of card sleights in your repertoire. Fig. 57 illustrates a smart deception which, at a short distance, looks remarkably clever. You have been doing

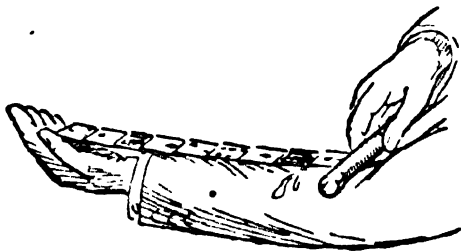


FIG. 57.

some card work, and, holding your wand in your left hand, you direct about a score of cards up your arm, and then, passing the wand back again towards your hand, the cards entirely disappear. It makes an artistic finish to pretend that you really have all the cards in your left hand, and then to turn it, so that the back of it is towards

your audience, when you appear to be squeezing the pasteboards smaller and smaller. Before turning the hand round again, however, just give it a gentle touch with your mystic wand; then quickly reveal the hand (wide open) towards the company, thus proving the flight of the cards. These may be produced from your pocket (or someone else's) in a long, continuous string. In order to bring about these two effects, you must have a special wand and a special pack of cards. The wand is made of wood, painted black, and has white ends of nickel, or ivory, according to the fancy of the manufacturer. Moreover, it is hollow, and inside possesses a number of imitation cards printed upon a silk ribbon. There is a slit in the middle of the wand, and a wire attached to the first card protrudes through it. Holding the wand in the palm of the left hand, you gain a grip of the protruding wire; and as you draw the wand up your arm, with your right hand, the cards unwind themselves from off the roller. By reversing the order of things the cards very kindly retire to their appointed resting-place. The cards which are reproduced in one long continuous string are joined to one another by a tape at the back, and are sold by all dealers in magical apparatus at a trifling cost. If you intend to get these out of a pocket other than your own, you must have a quiet chat with an accomplice beforehand.

#### LIGHTED CANDLE PRODUCTION.

It makes a very startling finish to a trick in which a candle has been vanished to reproduce it alight from one of your pockets. This you will be able to do yourself after reading the *modus operandi*, which is as follows: Just above one of your inside breast pockets sew a small piece of sandpaper, and no further preparation is required; but you must have a specially-constructed candle, the wick of which resembles a wax vesta. These can be purchased from any magical depot, and are not at all costly. In producing the candle from your pocket, the only thing you have to do is to draw the head of it gently against the sandpaper, when it ignites.

## A USEFUL MATCHBOX.

Here is, at last, something which you can make for yourself, at a very little outlay; and when you have made it you will possess a handy little piece of apparatus, which can be used for a number of different deceptions—*e.g.*, those in which a candle must be lighted or a handkerchief discovered. Fig 58 illus-



FIG. 58.

trates a box of matches (size 3 inches by 2 inches by 1 inch), from which you have extracted a match to light Lord Tom Noddy's cigar (or for some similar purpose). You have permitted the audience to see that the box was *full* of matches, although their attention was not specially drawn to the fact. Now a handkerchief is vanished, by any method that suits the performer best; then, upon opening the matchbox again (Fig 59), the silk is discovered, but the matches are not there. I have given one only of the many ways in which this handy little article can be utilized; but many others will suggest themselves



FIG. 59.

after you have made it. All that you want is a big box of Bryant and May's matches, and some strong gum, fish-glue or other similar substance, together with a pocket knife. Cut the bottom of the matchbox out; then fix it halfway down, so that the box is now divided into two halves of equal depth (*i.e.*  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch each). In one half glue a number of matches, taking care to leave space

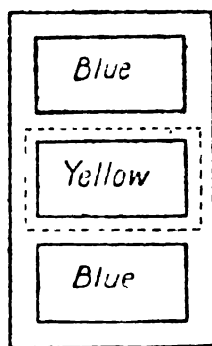
for two or three loose ones. In the other half place a duplicate of the silk handkerchief you intend to vanish. In presenting the experiment you have the box on your table, matches uppermost; and, having lighted Lord Tom Noddy's cigar, you replace box on your table—but this time with the handkerchief compartment uppermost. Then vanish a silk, and find it again in the matchbox!

### PART III

#### MAGIC BRICKS.

What I term "Magic Bricks" is not really new, but merely an innovation, being nothing more nor less than a fresh version of an old trick which was presented many years ago at the Palace Theatre, London, by a certain English Wizard, who, not content with being a Britisher, coloured his face, neck, hands and forearms, and aped being a dark-skinned foreigner—he using numbers on the bricks instead of stars.

It has also been sold on the market with letters on the bricks, in which latter form I have worked it myself with considerable success throughout the United Kingdom.



*Back View*

FIG. 6a.

**EFFECT.**—Three square blocks of wood are handed round for examination. Two of these are painted dark blue and the third yellow, whilst for the purpose of display they each have a silver star on the front side. Upon receiving these back from the audience the conjurer proceeds to stack them up one on top of the other, taking care that the yellow one is in the middle.

A cover is next exhibited; this is usually made of stout cardboard or very thin wood, and is generally ornamented with painted artistic designs, or by transfers of flowers,

birds or perhaps some Oriental figure, etc. The company are invited to note the order of the blocks of wood before the cover is placed over them—this latter is open at the top and bottom and therefore consists of merely four sides and of sufficient height exactly to cover the three pieces of wood when they are stacked one on top of the other.

A hard felt billycock, or "bowler," is now borrowed from "a kind, good-looking gentleman" in the auditorium.

"You may think, perhaps, that this is a trick-table or that it contains traps, so I will remove the tablecloth." With these words the wizard picks up the covered blocks and places them for a moment on the hat, removes tablecloth and replaces the blocks (still covered) on to the table again, carelessly throwing the tablecloth over the "bowler," which latter he places on a chair some considerable distance away from the table—the greater the distance the more wonderful the effect!

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have already noted the order of the magic bricks, and to make doubly sure I will just remove the cover once more, as I should not like you to think that I am trying to deceive you in any way whatsoever." Whilst thus "telling the tale" the man of many mysteries removes the cover once more, thereby revealing the fact that the two blue blocks are there safe and sound but, alas, the yellow one has gone! Upon removing the tablecloth from the billycock, the yellow block of wood is found inside the hat!

SECRET.—At the back of the cover a portion is cut away as indicated by the dotted lines. This space is just large enough for the yellow block of wood (which is in the middle) to pass through, thus allowing the top blue block to fall on to the bottom one, and this is brought about in the following manner: When the performer "told the tale" about the table, etc., "it was merely so much "bluff" (showmanship if you like), but it afforded just the opportunity he required—viz., an excuse momentarily to place the case containing the blocks on the hat so that (unknown to the spectators) the yellow square might have a chance to escape via the back door, so to speak.

I must here explain that although the blocks stand on

the table in the *perpendicular* position, they are placed on the hat in the *horizontal* position, with the back of the cover downwards so that the yellow piece of wood finds no difficulty in dropping into the chapeau, its presence there being obscured *pro tem.* by the tablecloth, which is quickly thrown over it whilst the remaining two blocks and cover are again put on the table.

If in presenting the deception you wish to heighten the effect, you may put your arm through the empty cover, but in so doing remember that the back must be kept towards your body the whole time to avoid the opening in back being seen by anybody.

### THE FLYING LADY.

This illusion is sometimes known under the title of "The Floating Lady," because she appears to "float" in the air—but the exact name is a small matter after all.

EFFECT.—A young lady makes her bow to the audience, and proceeds to stand in the centre of the stage, and rather near the back cloth. The illusionist now waves his hands, first in this direction, and then in that direction, and, as if obeying the motions of his hands, the lady is seen to arise from the ground and apparently float in the air up and down—to the right and then to the left. She stops still in mid-air, with no visible means of support; a hoop is passed over her feet, over her body, yes, and even over her head, and back again, to *prove* (in magical logic) that there are no wires or other means of support resorted to.

Finally, the illusionist motions to the lady again and she gradually, but surely, descends till her feet again reach the floor, when she once more bows to the audience and retires.

SECRET.—In giving away this secret I must hasten to explain that there are several "flying" or "floating" lady illusions known to the magical fraternity, but the one about to be described is perhaps the easiest to work, least expensive to build, and therefore to be desired before all others. To begin with, then, the back cloth is made of black velvet, the young lady usually wears a sash. This



THE GREAT "FLYING LADY" ILLUSION.

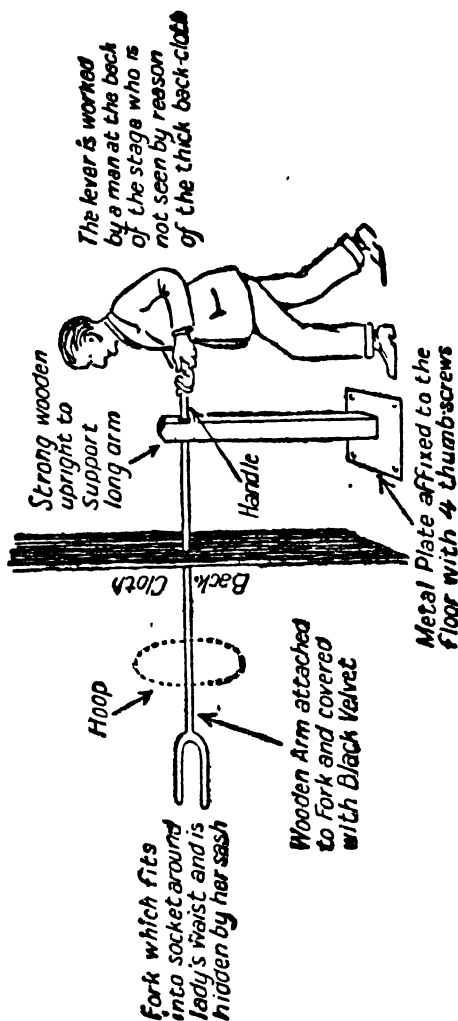


FIG. 61.

is useful. Through the back cloth is a strong arm made of wood, which is controlled at the back of the stage by a strong support, and affixed to the stage by a metal plate as illustrated in the figure.

At the end of the wooden arm is a handle which is held, and worked, by an unfortunate man who can find nothing better to do in order to eke out a livelihood.

The front portion of the arm terminates in a kind of fork, which is constructed in such a manner as to exactly fit into a kind of circular metal tube, which is hollow, and which fits round the lady's waist, and is hidden by her innocent-looking sash.

It will therefore be seen that the man behind the scenes has only to press *down* on his handle and *up* goes the lady, and if he moves the arm to his right, she will move to the left of stage, and *vice versa*. It will also be noted that a hoop could quite easily be passed over the young lady's body and back again (as indicated by the dotted lines in the diagram) without really *proving* anything at all, but so long as an unthinking public prefer to imagine it *proves* the absence of visible means of support, well, let them be gulled thereby!

Some performers prefer to hypnotize (?) their subjects prior to this aerial flight, but nowadays this course is not to be recommended, as most people imagine (and rightly, too) such hypnotism to be merely by-play, and the illusion is therefore apt to be rather reduced than otherwise by the introduction of that which can be very well done without.

## JACOB'S LADDER."

I trust that I may be forgiven for introducing a deception "as old as the hills," but I have two reasons for so doing. Firstly, one never sees it performed anywhere, and, secondly, it has quite a good spectacular effect; furthermore, it is simple to work and inexpensive to purchase.

EFFECT.—A number of sheets of coloured tissue paper are stuck together, so that they form a continual stream of yellow, red, blue, violet, brown, white, etc. These are rolled up into a packet in much the same way as one might roll up a sheet of music; then a portion of the

centre is torn completely away, and the two ends of the tissue paper are held by someone from the audience, whilst the performer catches hold of two loose ends from the torn-away central portions, and, pulling these gently, but persuasively, he gradually draws forth what, for many years past, has been known amongst magicians as "Jacob's Ladder," being to all intents and purposes a ladder made out of coloured tissue paper, and about six or seven feet in height!

SECRET.—For the purpose of this experiment one requires a shelf at the back of one's table, and this can be of



FIG. 62.

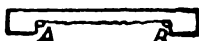


FIG. 63.

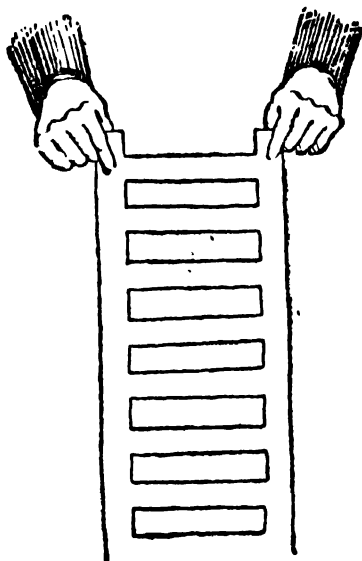


FIG. 64.

the homemade sort or bought from a dealer. But at the moment we are only concerned with the paper ladder, which is already made and rolled up as previously indicated. This prepared bundle of paper lies on the aforesaid shelf at the back of the table; the unprepared paper is exhibited, duly rolled up, and *exchanged* for the roll lying peacefully upon the shelf.

The rest is plain sailing, because you simply cannot make a mistake, owing to the fact that the prepared roll is so constructed that the middle of each section (*i.e.*, between

the steps on the ladder) is already cut away, and the piece which the performer is seen to tear away is merely the single outside sheet, although the spectators think he has really torn away, neatly and cleanly, each and every step on the ladder!

I do not recommend attempting to construct these fake ladders, as they can be purchased from any dealer for a few pence, and are sure to be far more satisfactory than a home-made amateur thing. The only point to which attention must be specially directed is this: When rolling up the coloured paper be careful to see that the last, or outside sheet, is of the same colour as the outside sheet of the faked roll. Thus, if the outside of the faked ladder is yellow, the outside sheet of paper rolled up between your hands must also be yellow, and so forth.

Fig. 62 represents the faked roll of paper, and the dotted lines indicate where the paper is cut away—but not the outside sheet, of course, or it would be seen by the audience.

Fig. 63 shows the same roll of paper actually torn away, A and B being the two portions of paper which have to be pulled out in order to construct a ladder on similar lines to that indicated in Fig. 64 only very much longer! As far as the shelf, or *servante*, is concerned this can be made of cardboard, metal, or wood, but a proper conjuring table usually has a portable one already affixed thereto.

### INDIAN ROPE TRICK.

You will observe I do not call this illusion "*The Indian Rope Trick*," because I am of the same opinion as Mr. Nevil Maskelyne, who told us (in "*Fifty Years of Magic*") that "the rope trick is just a myth."

Nevertheless, the fact remains that there is a certain rope trick—which you can call "*Indian*" if you like—known to modern magicians, and, having presented the illusion myself in the music-halls, I am in a position to tell you that it is possible for a boy to vanish from a rope in about a quarter of a second, and that this can be performed on a fully carpeted, fully lighted stage is, I venture to suggest, if anything, rather more wonderful than doing

it in India with "jointed bamboos covered with hemp" and "the glare of the sun dazzling the eyes" (to quote Mr. Maskelyne) to assist in the operation.

I have heard a good deal about these "foreign" performers, but although I have witnessed many of them at home and abroad, I am bound to confess I cannot for one moment think or believe these foreign wonder-workers are any more clever than the Britisher, who usually wears rather tightly-fitting clothes, and as often as not works with his sleeves rolled right up to his elbows!

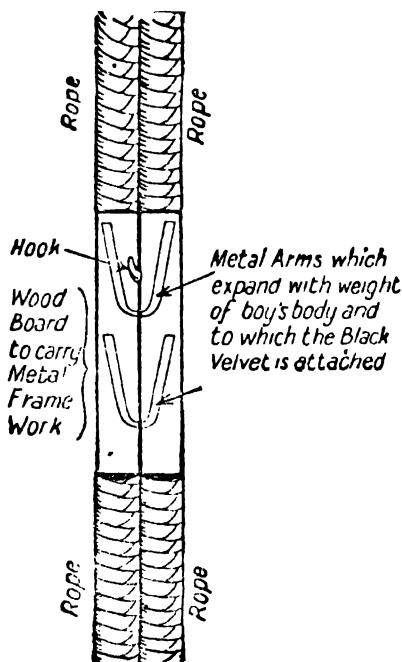


FIG. 65.

**EFFECT.**—In the centre of the stage is seen a huge rope, which hangs down from "the flies" and is secured to the floor by a strong metal hook. Up this rope climbs a native boy (in other words he has a dark skin) till about midway between the stage and "the borders." He is then commanded to "stop." He does so, still clinging to the rope whilst the performer says: "You must, you will, you shall 'Go'!" At the word "Go," the boy with the dark skin disappears and is no more seen.

**SECRET.**—Now, to begin with, I must mention that the so-called "rope" is in reality two ropes of

similar dimensions, placed side by side and attached to one another. Also they are enormous in size, in fact the largest ropes I have ever seen in my life, so that when placed side by side they afford considerable "cover" for the concealment of certain apparatus, which shall be described in detail presently.

Also the stage "back-cloth" is not a pretty painted scene, as is so often the case, but jet black velvet. As far as the boy being a native is concerned, he may be a "native" of Whitechapel or Birmingham, or anywhere else you like, for his "dark skin" is usually limited to his hands and face, whilst the tan is generally caused by the appropriate use of brown grease paint and "gipsy-powder."

As is always the case where stage illusions are concerned, what the audience do *not* see is far more important than what they *do* see, and, in this case, it is a black velvet screen, which is attached to a metal collapsible frame,

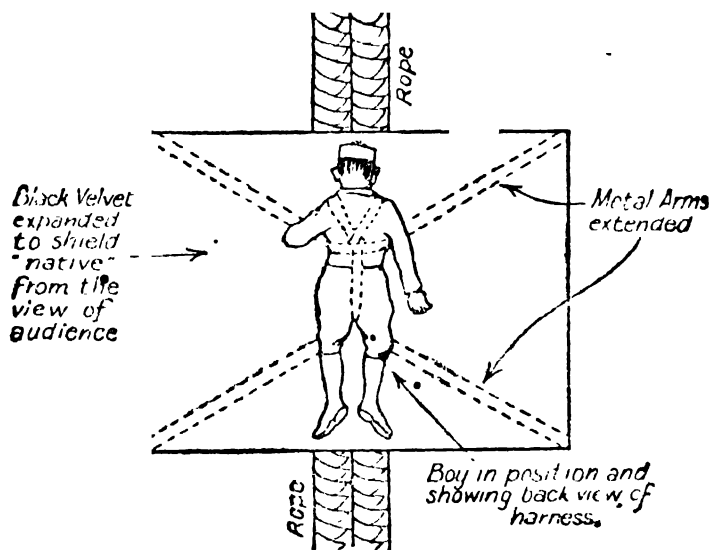


FIG. 66.

which latter is fastened to the back of the ropes and about midway between floor and ceiling.

To the metal framework is attached a hook. Underneath the native's coat he wears leather harness, which goes over his shoulders and between his legs; and to the centre of this harness (in front) is affixed a strong metal ring, which, during the few moments when he is commanded to "stop" climbing the rope, he slyly slips on to the aforesaid metal hook.

He is now quite ready to elope at the given signal, but he carefully continues to hold tight on to the ropes, and does not leave go till requested to do so by the illusionist. The moment he hears "Go," he leaves go of the ropes with arms, hands, legs and feet, and simply lets himself drop down and hang in mid-air behind the ropes, where his body is hidden from the spectators by reason of the black velvet blind which has now expanded, but cannot be noticed on account of the black velvet back cloth.

It was the weight of his body which opened the metal framework, and thus expanded the material, in much the same way that the silk of a sunshade expands when the sunshade is put up. The reason why the rope is fastened at the bottom to the stage is in order forcibly to prevent the rope from turning round whilst the boy climbs up it, which accident would, of course, reveal the otherwise concealed mechanism.

At the word "Go" a gong may be struck or a pistol fired to add to the effect, or even a sheet of flashpaper ignited.

N.B.—I must warn the reader that, when rehearsing this most startling illusion, the boy is generally the chief stumbling block, for at the word of command he usually does *not* let go of the rope, for the very natural reason that (never having done it before) he feels as if he is going to drop to Mother Earth, and he does not take kindly to the idea!

However, on being assured that he cannot possibly fall, and that he is perfectly safe, he will quickly get into the hang of the thing—in more senses than one. The weight of the lad should be from seven to eight stone.

#### BALANCING A GLASS ON A CARD.

This seeming impossibility—*i.e.*, balancing a glass on a playing card, as illustrated in Fig. 67—can only be done by purchasing a specially constructed card, which will cost the reader sixpence.

EFFECT.—After doing some card tricks, you can bring this portion of your programme to a fitting close by taking one card from the pack, holding it up in the air, and placing on top thereof a tumbler, which will remain in that

position till you care to take it down again, when the card can be shown back and front without fear of detection.

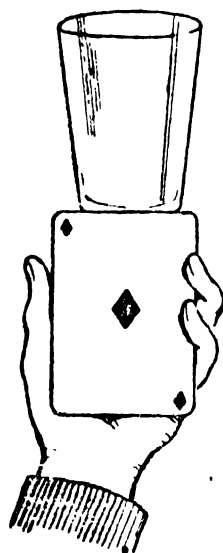


FIG. 67.

SECRET.—The trick card is made from two cards, one of which is cut as indicated by the dotted lines in Fig. 68.

The portion marked A is movable; when allowed to remain flat against the face card it cannot be seen at all, and it simply looks like one card. When, however, the glass is to be balanced, this little trap-door arrangement can easily be made to project, and can be held in position by the first and second fingers of the left hand, whilst the card itself is securely held by the thumb, third and fourth fingers (Fig. 67).

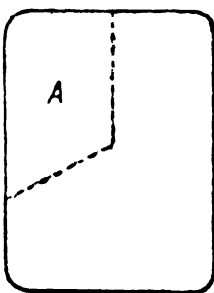


FIG. 68.

It will be understood that the glass

now rests upon a small platform, shaped something like the letter T, the top portion being formed by the top edge of the playing card, and the back portion formed by the unseen fake at the back thereof.

PRESENTATION.—“You have all seen performers walk on the silver wire in a circus, but I am going to display this evening a far more wonderful balancing feat than that. I have in my hand an ordinary pack of cards” (let the on-lookers see that the cards are quite innocent, taking, however, the precaution to keep the faked card at the bottom, so that when you place the pack down on the table, face downwards, the trick card will naturally be on the top) “and an equally ordinary glass tumbler.”

Whilst talking thus you pick up the prepared card with your left hand, and the tumbler with your right, and proceed to attempt to balance the latter on the top of the former, but you are unsuccessful the first time, and the glass falls forward and is caught again in the right hand,



during which accident (?) the first and second fingers of the left hand adjust the fake at back of card, in consequence of which your next attempt is successful.

When you consider the glass has remained sufficiently long on top of the card, take it down and place it again on the table, turn the card round so that everybody can see that the back is quite harmless—this you may do quite freely, because the flap is held to the true card by a piece of sheet elastic, so that the moment you remove your fingers out of the way, the flap will at once fly back again flat against the face card, and you may take it from me, no observer who is unacquainted with the working of the trick will even begin to imagine how you did it.

### THE DIMINUENDO CARD.

You may often see a wizard on the music-hall stage take a pack of cards and cause them to get smaller and smaller till at last they vanish into thin air.

This well-known feat requires fine sleight-of-hand, and I should not recommend my readers to attempt it unless they have had a good deal of experience in tricks with cards without apparatus.

A similar effect, however, can be brought about with one single card, and as this is a specially prepared one, which can be purchased from a magical dealer for small initial cost, I will here and now tell you all about it, and, having done so, I expect you will buy one in the near future.

**EFFECT.**—A card (say two of spades) is held in performer's right hand, then transferred to his left hand, and finally to his right hand again. Each time, however, the card changes hands it gets smaller and smaller—just half the preceding size in each case, the original one having been the ordinary size of a usual playing card.

**SECRET.**—This card is composed of three cards, one (ordinary size) on the front and two smaller ones on the back. When the full-sized card is passed from one hand to the other it is simply folded at A, and the card now seen is consequently exactly half its original size. Again passing the card from one hand to the other, the same thing once

more happens, the card this time being folded at BB. The card has now become exactly one-quarter its original size (Fig. 69).

PRESENTATION.—“Ladies and gentlemen, you have all heard, no doubt, of Tom Thumb playing cards, which are very much smaller than ordinary ones, and therefore most convenient for travelling purposes; these, however, are quite easy to make, and, if all of you had had the practice I have had, I am sure you would do it without difficulty. Here, for instance” (pick up card from pack, the prepared trick card, and mind it is face uppermost), “we have a card of ordinary size, which you desire to transform into one more suitable for carrying in the pocket. All one has to do is to pass it from the right hand to the left” (fold card during this process), “and there you are! But this is not exactly what you might call Tom Thumb’s size, is it? No, I think not. Never mind, I’ll try again; if at first you don’t succeed, try Brasso” (fold card once more). “Here it is, the very thing—Tom Thumb edition.”

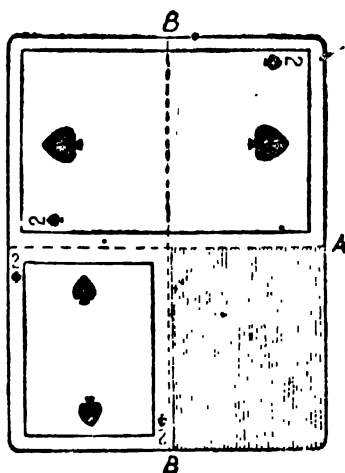


FIG. 69.

## THE “LOST AND FOUND” ILLUSION.

### WHAT THE SPECTATORS SEE.

Into an elongated ornamental case is placed an assistant. The case is then closed, swords (three in number) are pushed through three holes in the top of the case, and the points of such swords are seen to appear through the bottom thereof. As each sword is thrust through its victim a scream—agonizing and ghastly—is heard to proceed from the aforesaid case. A moment later, however, the case is opened and found to contain—*nothing*.

A large trunk is now brought forward and pulled up into mid-air by a chain; at the same time an ornamental platform is brought on to the stage, and the travelling trunk lowered on to it. The trunk is now opened and found to contain another trunk, which latter is hauled out of the first trunk by the chain which is suspended from the flies. Upon opening the second trunk it is found to contain a third, and upon this being opened the audience see the very self-same assistant whom they saw in the first place put into the elaborate case through which swords were mercilessly thrust.

As this is rather a complicated illusion, I think I had better describe the various pieces of apparatus used in detail, one by one, thus:

#### APPARATUS THAT IS NEEDED.

1. THE CASE.—This is prettily got up for appearance sake. It is just long and narrow enough to accommodate comfortably an assistant of, say, 5 feet 6 inches in height.

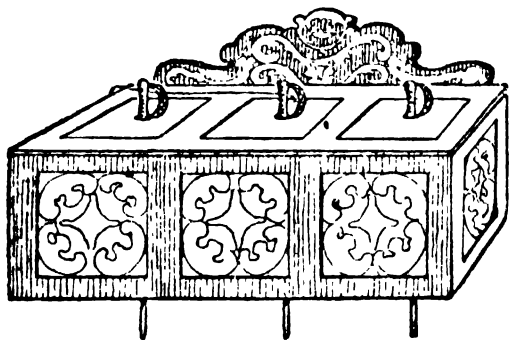


FIG. 70.

The top opens, and contains three holes, each large enough for a sword-blade to pass through. The front also opens, and "lets down," being on hinges. The back is also on hinges, and "lets down" at the back (out-

wards). The bottom of the case is double, the first (or false) bottom is on hinges, and can be pulled by a cord in an upward position so that it forms a temporary back, and the true bottom has three holes corresponding to the three holes in the lid, so that when swords are passed through the holes in the lid they also pass through the holes in the bottom, but are prevented from falling through altogether

on account of their handles. Fig. 70 gives a good idea of the case when closed, and shows the three swords in position.

2. THE PLATFORM.—This movable platform is essential for the purpose of the deception in question, for unless the trunks were lowered on to it the assistant could not reappear as already indicated. The top of it is rather like a draught-board, this special design being chosen on account of it disguising the trap contained thereon more effectually than any other design.

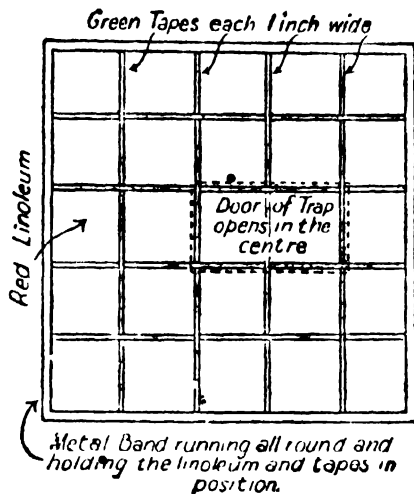


FIG. 71.

Fig. 71 gives one an idea of the top of this platform, the dotted lines indicating the door of the trap, whilst Fig. 72 shows a side view of the same thing

—the dotted lines again representing the trap, into which latter an assistant gets (behind the scenes) after leaving the case and prior to his discovery in the innermost travelling trunk.

The trap cannot, of course, be seen from the auditorium (owing to the lavish woodwork on all four sides of the platform, which latter is on wheels to facilitate

getting it from the wings into the middle of the stage) even when "loaded" with an assistant, whose head is towards

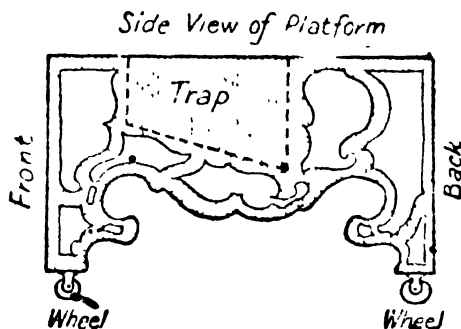


FIG. 72.

the front portion of the trap, and whose feet are towards the back.

3. THE TRUNKS.—A quarter of a dozen trunks are so constructed as to fit one inside the other, the smallest being

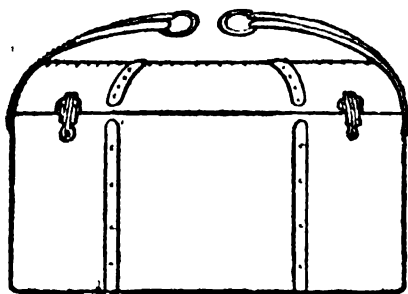


FIG. 73.

just large enough to accommodate one person of average size. The largest one is shown in Fig. 73, and has four strong leather straps—two each side—which terminate in a strong metal ring, to which latter is attached a hook suspended from a chain in the flies, so that the trunks can be hauled up

from the stage into mid-air, and lowered again on to the platform.

This having been done, the first trunk is opened, and the hook again adjusted to the rings of trunk No. 2, which is hauled out from No. 1 and lowered on to platform again, but immediately over the trap, where, of course, an assist-

*Bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
Trunk almost entirely  
cut away so that the  
trap in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Trunk  
can be opened by the  
assistant in platform.*

*Hinges —*

*Trap door in the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Trunk opening  
upwards and in the  
middle as indicated  
by dotted line—really  
two small doors meeting  
each other in centre*

FIG. 74.

*Hinges —*

FIG. 75

ant is concealed. He now, however, opens the trap in platform, pushes up door in trap of third trunk, climbs through second trunk into third, and closes trap-door after him. The trunk No. 3 is now hauled out from No. 2, and upon being opened reveals the long-lost assistant. (See Figs. 74 and 75.)

4. **THE SCREEN.**—The last piece of apparatus to need description in connection with this magical masterpiece is an ordinary looking screen, made of green baize and ornamented with gold. This is illustrated in Fig. 76, from which will be noticed a small door in the centre of the second panel

—the screen being fourfold. The case (into which the assistant is placed at the outset) stands upon two trestles immediately in front of this screen. Directly the illusionist shuts the front and top of case, the assistant lets down the back of case

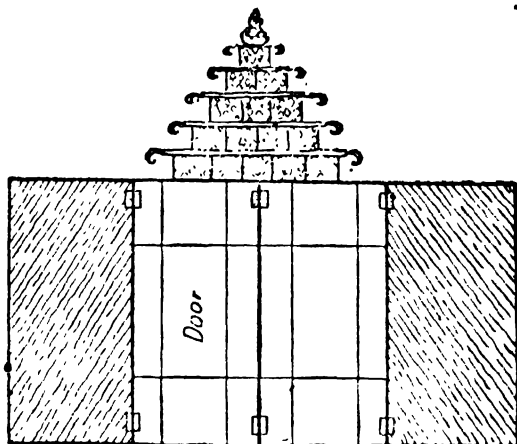


FIG. 76.

on to trestles, pushes open door in screen, gets through it, runs to platform (in wings), gets into trap, and is carried by two other men on to the stage, where the trunk business is gone through as previously described.

I must not forget to state that two assistants stand either side of the case, and whilst one fetches the swords the other pulls a cord which automatically pulls up the false bottom of the case so that it now forms the back of the case—the true back resting peacefully upon the trestles, thus facilitating escape (through door in screen), which must be done in great haste.

## THE VANISHING MATCH.

When performing a magical experiment in which a match plays a part it is as well to use some sort of trick match—e.g., those which will not ignite or those made of

sweetmeat and which can therefore be eaten or, as in the present case, a match which, having been lighted suddenly, disappears by some unknown medium.

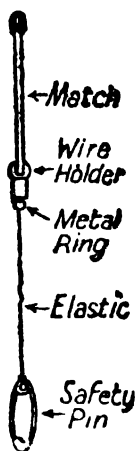


FIG. 77.

**EFFECT.**—A match is extracted from a matchbox in the ordinary way, ignited, and just as one is going to light a candle, the match escapes from the bare hands. This excellent effect I prefer not to regard in the light of a complete trick, but merely a sort of little sleight, without which most magical entertainments would be dull and uninteresting, and the more sidelines of this character that are introduced into a performance the better.

**SECRET.**—The special apparatus for this vanish is shown in the figure, and consists of circular piece of wire into which a match is placed. Affixed to this holder is a metal ring, "quite a miniature affair" (to quote Gilbert), and from this hangs a short piece of elastic which is tied at the other end to a safety-pin, this last-named being adjusted to the inside

portion of the performer's coat-sleeve.

The match is placed into the little holder and allowed to hang in position till the rise of the curtain, when possession of it is gained and retained between the fingers, when the elastic will, of course, be stretched taut. Pretending to take a match from the matchbox the entertainer really allows the hidden one to come into sight, strikes it upon the side of the box in the ordinary way, and as soon as it bursts into flame it "goes" again far quicker than it arrived, and, for once, the spectators would be quite correct if they said "up his sleeve," as they are so fond of saying; for sure enough, by merely relaxing his hold of the match the elastic quickly pulls the match up the performer's sleeve, and before it arrives there the flame is out. So there is no need to fear burning either one's arm or one's clothing.

Fortunately this piece of apparatus is easy to make and inexpensive to buy ready-made. Experience alone will decide the exact length of elastic most suitable in practice.

## A VANISHING COIN TRICK.

You have probably seen a wizard at some time or other vanish a coin from the finger-tips—one moment the coin is there, and the next moment it isn't! Generally speaking, this effect (usually worked with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows) is brought about through the medium of pure sleight-of-hand, but as a matter of fact a similar effect can be arrived at by the help of mechanical means. .

EFFECT.—The performer displays his right hand empty so that everybody present can clearly see that there is nothing there. Having satisfied the audience on this point, the hand is now turned over so that the back of same can be seen and *proved* (in conjurer's logic at any rate) entirely free from preparation.

He now waves his hand in the air and produces a silvery coin about the size of a florin. This he pretends to place in a hat, and proceeds to "catch" another coin or finds one behind his knee, and puts that, too, into the hat. He continues to produce coins from his hair, behind his ear and other impossible places, each time putting such coins into the aforesaid hat.

At the finish, performer picks up the hat and makes believe that he is going to throw the contents to the audience, but, low be it spoken, no coins are forthcoming and the chapeau is empty!

SECRET.—The coin (one only is used throughout the whole experiment) is specially made for sleight-of-hand work and is, in circumference about the size of a two-shilling piece, but is much lighter in weight and has a very good milled edge. Furthermore, it has attached to it, above and below, a small semicircle of metal (painted flesh colour), which latter fits under the first finger and over the little finger of the right hand.

The figure is an exact reproduction (in miniature) of the entire apparatus, from which diagram it will be clearly seen that the coin is really a revolving one, and that the revolutions are brought about through the medium of two small swivels (A and B) attached to the coin and also to the fake. When performer shows his hand empty the



coin is at the back of his hand and hidden from view by his two middle fingers. When he shows the back of his hand all he has to do is to bring his two middle fingers

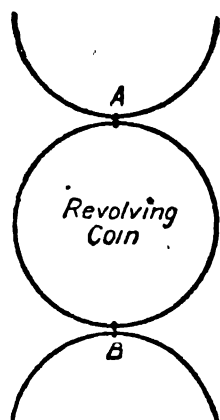


FIG. 78.

behind the coin, and it is again hidden from the evil eyes of the spectators—in other words, the coin can be either “produced” or “vanished” at the will of the operator by simply bringing the two middle fingers either in front of the coin or behind it, as the case may be.

It is a big improvement to work this experiment in such a manner that the audience can hear the coins “chink” as they fall into the hat. This additional effect is brought about by having someone behind the scenes with a coin, a plate, a piece of wood, and a piece of string.

The coin has a hole in it, and through this hole is passed a piece of string, the other end of which is tied to a piece of wood (a pencil will do). The assistant holds a plate in left hand and the rest of the paraphernalia in his right hand. As the conjurer pretends to drop a coin into the hat, so the hidden confederate allows his coin to drop against the plate, and the necessary “chink” is thereby produced and the effect heightened.

### NEW MYSTIC ROSE.

I use the word “new” for fear my readers might think this was the well-known mystic rose effect in which latter, you may remember, yards upon yards of coloured ribbon are produced from the centre of an ordinary common-organ, innocent-looking rose. Upon reading the effect of this mystery, however, you will at once see that this particular trick is not connected in any way with the older, and more familiar, deception.

**EFFECT.**—The performer picks up a red silk handkerchief, and, rubbing it between his hands, transforms it into a beautiful red rose which he places in a vase on his table,

or wears in the lapel of his coat during the remainder of his performance. A distinct improvement on the old mystic rose trick!

**SECRET.**—The necessary accessory for the due discharge of this seeming impossibility consists of nothing more serious than a celluloid ball with a hole in it—*à la* the celluloid egg for vanishing a piece of silk. This ball is covered all over (except the hole) with petals (made of cloth, dyed and cut to shape) to represent a rose, and the handkerchief is vanished by pushing it through the hole and thus into the otherwise empty ball. It is carefully made and of lasting durability.

### RABBITS GALORE.

Having just completed some deception in which a rabbit plays the title rôle (as, for example, in the well-known tambourine trick, when a rabbit is usually produced from the ribbons) it has a wonderful effect upon an audience if one says: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is a curious thing, but whenever I look a rabbit in the face it always multiplies!" So saying, one rabbit becomes two rabbits, which are held at arm's length, one in each hand.

**SECRET.**—As before stated, we will suppose you have just finished the tambourine trick and as a grand finale brought forth a rabbit from the endless yards of paper ribbon. All eyes are naturally on the live stock which you hold in your left hand, and, turning to your right, make-believe that you intend depositing the animal on the seat of a chair. Under cover of this subtle move and whilst all eyes are still fixed on Mr. Bunny, your right hand finds its way to a deep pocket (lined with buckram), situated on the right of your tail coat, and specially made for this purpose. Whilst still with your left side towards the audience, pull out the rabbit from its hiding place, and, instead of actually depositing bunny No. 1 on the chair, make a half-right turn so that bunny No. 2 is now towards the spectators and No. 1 still in your left hand. As, however, both hands are now held as closely together as possible, and as both animals are jet black they merely

appear like one, until, making a little speech, as indicated above (or words to that effect), you turn round completely and face the audience, simultaneously parting the hands, thus displaying two live rabbits kicking for all they are worth!

I cannot describe the impression this illusion makes upon an audience, and can only suggest that you "try it" if you want to hear undertones of "How wonderful!" "Isn't it marvellous!" etc.

There are in connection with this masterpiece just a few all-important points which must not be overlooked—viz., 1. The rabbits must be young and small, *jet black*—i.e., without a single spot of white anywhere on their bodies, and if precisely alike in size and weight so much the better. 2. The pocket which contains the second rabbit is built for the purpose, having its opening upwards and sufficiently large to enable the little creature to lie comfortably till needed for its part. Furthermore, the pocket should be so placed that the fingers of the right hand fall naturally in line with bunny's ears.

### A RAPID VANISH.

It frequently happens that a wizard has to "vanish" a silk handkerchief, and it is as well to be prepared with a variety of methods in order to avoid undue repetition. The particular way of disposing of a small silk handkerchief now under observation has the advantage of being extremely rapid—i.e., one moment the handkerchief is there and the next moment it is not! This cannot be said about such methods as (1) the drawer box, (2) paper cone, (3) glove (or domino) box, and other well-known pieces of apparatus, all of which are designed more or less for the vanishing of handkerchiefs and similar articles. No, I believe this to be quite one of the most startling illusions one could possibly wish to witness, and, not only extremely effective, but certain in action and inexpensive to make.

REQUISITES.—A glass gas chimney, a silk handkerchief, a gut violin string (G string), half a yard of sarcenet ribbon, a good nerve, and plenty of showmanship. Pre-

pare as follows: Make a loop in one end of the sarcenet ribbon and to the other end of it tie the violin string, to the end of which latter must be another small loop through which a silk handkerchief is placed, and the loop in the ribbon is now placed on your right arm and pulled taut. Needless to say, the right sleeve will have to be removed for these preparations, which, when completed, the performer is now ready to face the footlights and come "on," holding in his left hand a glass chimney into which he is seen to be pushing a silk handkerchief of some fast colour. By the time he has got to the centre of the stage the silk is in the middle of the glass tube, which latter the performer now grasps at either end with his open palms. Drawing attention to the fact that "the tube is not at all out of place whilst he is *talking* as it is a gas chimney," the magician requests everybody present to watch his movements as closely as possible, as accidents happen sometimes with glass properties even in the best regulated families! So saying, and without further warning, he allows the glass tube to fall from his hands (as if by accident) and catches it again, with both palms, just before it reaches the floor, when, as the reader has guessed, the kerchief has gone (for once) "up his sleeve," but, strangely enough, nobody ever seems to imagine that that is really what has actually happened, and if a duplicate piece of silk is discovered elsewhere the mystery will be brought to a fitting climax.

My one objection to this beautiful effect is that it can only be used as an opening experiment, for by reason of the necessary preparations these could obviously not be made in full view of the audience.

### DRAUGHT-BOARDS MADE WHILE YOU WAIT.

The performer holds in his right hand a sheet of black paper, and in his left hand he holds a sheet of white paper. He places the two pieces of paper together and tears them in half, then in half again, finally rolling them into a ball which he compresses between his two palms. Now the pieces of paper are opened out wide, the creases

smoothed away as far as possible, and the fact revealed that "the Scottish national colours have amalgamated" to the extent that the performer no longer holds two (or more) distinct pieces of tissue-paper, but a draught-board with the usual black and white squares! The size of this latter should be exactly the same as the original pieces of paper, which is largely a matter of taste, but I suggest 20 inches square as being the most suitable size, as it is easily handled and also easily seen by the audience when opened out wide for that purpose. But now to answer that burning question, "How is it done?" Well, to begin with, the black sheet of paper is double—that is to say, between the front sheet and the back sheet there is a kind of pocket which is not noticeable at a short distance away. These two sheets of black paper are gummed together at their respective edges, and the draught-board is made by pasting strips of black and white tissue-paper together *à la* an ordinary draught-board. It is easily folded and in a compressed form takes up very little room indeed, so that it can be enveloped in the black paper bag (so to speak) without fear of detection. When tearing up the paper the performer takes care not to tear the draught-board also, and loses no time in neatly palming it directly the paper is torn sufficiently to enable him to do so. This done, the process of palming the torn paper and opening out the prepared draught-board is next gone through, and, at the finish, when the draught-board is fully exhibited it is held at the two top corners by the right and left hands, in the palm of one of which is a round ball of crumpled-up black and white tissue paper, which latter is not seen by the audience owing to the fact that the performer takes the precaution to keep his palms towards himself, and thus away from the spectators.

### A HANDY BOX.

From the beginning of magical history conjurers have always been keen on boxes of one sort and another. In some cases these have been just large enough to vanish a finger ring (or other small article), in other cases big

enough to comfortably take a full-sized man, as, for example, the great box mystery invented by that great magician, Mr. Maskelyne, and which was the cause of so much newspaper talk at the time of its presentation in England's Home of Mystery, and which led to an important case in the Law Courts.

The box now under consideration is "quite a miniature affair" (to quote the late Mr. Gilbert)—in fact, the exact size thereof is  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in. by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. In shape and general appearance it is not unlike the boxes in which dominoes are usually packed. It is made of rosewood and polished. The chief characteristics about this box are as follows: 1. The inside is double—that is to say, inside the box proper there is a drawer which can be removed entirely or left within the box at the will of the wizard. 2. To the bottom of the aforesaid drawer are glued two thin pieces of wood (Fig. 79, A and B), between which may be held securely a coin. Any coin can thus be held secure, from a sixpence to half a-crown, according to whichever end of the groove is used, the narrow or the deep (see diagram).

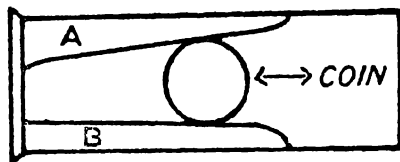


FIG. 79.

It is usual to have a second box made exactly the same as that described, but free from trickery of any kind. This latter is handed to the audience for inspection, and upon its return the performer adroitly exchanges it for the faked box.

All conjurers have their own pet methods, but the universal method of exchanging one small article for another is by secreting one of them under a broad elastic band, which is worn around the performer's waist under his waistcoat. Another way of getting over the difficulty is by having the trick box off your servante, at the back of a table, then, standing behind such table, exhibit the innocent box and, having closed it, hold it in the left hand. Pick up your wand with the right hand and look at it (also remark upon it if you like), and whilst everybody in front

of you is also busy following your eyes and watching the wand, your left hand quietly deposits the ordinary box on the servante and brings to light the prepared one, and no one will be any the wiser!

"But of what use is this box?" you will naturally ask. Well, as a matter of fact, it may be used in a variety of ways. Suppose, for the sake of example, you wish to vanish a silk handkerchief. All you need do is to open the box (by withdrawing the lid only), put the kerchief into it, shut the box, say "Presto," open the box again, taking care as you do so that this time you withdraw not only the lid but the inner drawer as well, thereby revealing the fact that the silk handkerchief has completely disappeared, the reappearance of which is, of course, merely a matter of taste and fancy.

Again, suppose you wish to vanish a shilling, as, for example, in the case of a shilling found inside a ball of worsted or fruit. Needless to say, you must get rid of the money somehow or other. Here, then, is a suitable chance to use "A Handy Box." This time, however, the order of things is exactly reversed, for upon opening the box the first time you take care to withdraw the inner portion together with the lid. Now between the true bottom of the box and the bottom of the drawer there is a space in which a coin can lie flat quite easily. Drop the money into this space, shut the box again, and rattle it so that everyone may hear distinctly that the shilling is still there. Now by tipping the box ever so little the coin will automatically slide into the groove shown in the illustration and indicated by A and B. Thus held, the money will not move, so if you now reopen the box by merely extracting the lid, the spectators will at once be bound to agree with you when you assert that "the cash has gone as quickly as it invariably does!" Needless to add, the discovery of the shilling in fruit or worsted (or anywhere else for that matter) is mere child's play, being dependent, as it is, upon the judicious use of a duplicate coin.

## CORN PLASTERS !

I was at Ashby some years ago, waiting for a friend outside a chemist's shop. Presently he came out with his purchase neatly done up in the usual fashion.

"Now," said he, "all you conjurers are to a great extent alike, in that you conjure with much the same sort of things—eggs, balls, handkerchiefs, flags and so forth. Why on earth don't you try to get away from the beaten track and conjure with unusual articles?"

"Such as?" I enquired.

"Well," said friend Harris, "such as what I have just been into that shop to buy."

"And what might that be?" I ventured to ask.

"Guess; I'll give you three guesses."

"Pills?"

"No."

"Tablets?"

"No."

"Shaving soap?"

"No. You are a poor guesser; why, corn plasters. I have never seen a magician conjure with corn plasters in my life; in fact, I don't suppose you could!"

I did not bet upon the subject, but merely made up my mind that I *would* conjure with corn plasters even if I died in the effort, and the following is the effect and explanation of what I manufactured.

The performer exhibits a box of round corn plasters of the ordinary type—viz., made of white felt, having a hole in the middle and gummed on the underneath side. He also displays two yards of baby-ribbon, tri-coloured—i.e., red, white and blue. He borrows a handkerchief, too, from a spectator. This, then, completes his apparatus.

The baby-ribbon is first folded in half, and the loop thus formed is threaded through the centre of the corn plaster as illustrated in Fig. 80. Upon the two ends of the ribbon are threaded six more plasters between the points A and B, also a knot is tied at B, and the two ends of ribbon C and D are held by two volunteer assistants.



The borrowed handkerchief is next thrown over the knot B, thus hiding the corn plasters for the time being.

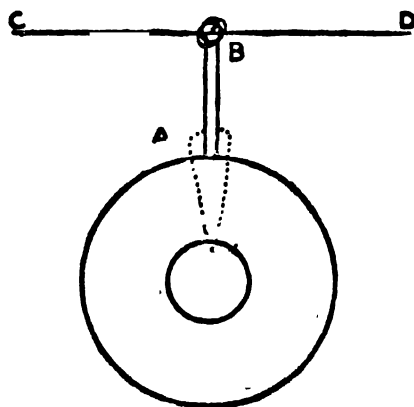


FIG. 80.

Mr. Wizard now places his hands underneath the handkerchief and quickly removes all the corn plasters between A and B, allowing them one by one to fall to the floor, yet, upon removing the kerchief the lowest plaster is still in position, and apparently as secure as at first. The question, therefore, not unnaturally arises, "How did the professor remove the six middle

plasters, with a knot above them, a plaster tied below them, and whilst the ends of the ribbon were held by non-confederates?" The answer is simple.

To begin with, the bottom plaster is not actually tied (with knots) to the ribbon, but merely threaded on to it and secured by the loop as indicated by the dotted lines in our diagram. It will therefore be seen that the conjurer has only to remove the loop outwards, right and left, and bring same to the bottom of the plaster, when the ribbon will at once slip through the central hole and be free, thus permitting all the other plasters to be withdrawn, one by one, and, when this has been accomplished, the original plaster can again be restored to its position by simply passing the looped ribbon once more through the central hole, and bringing up the ribbon around the sides of the plaster so that they once more appear as at the outset, and there you are!

## CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing pages I have given away the secrets of many deceptions in magic; and the tricks explained are of such a varied character that if the beginner fails to find something to suit both his purse and his dexterity he must indeed be hard to please. Having acquired these secrets by reading, do not tell everybody "how it's done." Let them find out for themselves, by purchasing a copy of this book.

Do not despair should you fail to win your laurels quite as quickly as you think you deserve, and remember that all the big *stars* have had to "go through the mill" of untiring effort and constant practice. Do not speak slightly of other magicians simply because they happen to work something that you can do yourself, and remember it is not *what* you do which tells with an audience, but the *way* in which you accomplish it.

Do not drag Scripture or ecclesiastical matters into your patter; and should you be performing at a Primrose League Concert it is wise not to be too eulogistic in your praises of the Liberal Party. Never crack "doubtful" jokes; and, above all, patter in the King's English.

Do not imagine conjuring is mere child's play. Some of a doctor's work is easy, and some of it is difficult; and it is so with the magician. The more you practise, so much the more skilful and ambidextrous are you likely to become. A modern audience, however, has no thought for the *difficulty*, or otherwise, of a trick; it is concerned only with the *effect*.

Throughout this book I have used the word "trick" in a popular sense, but I would venture to point out that the word "trick," as applied to a magical experiment, is quite wrong. Such experiment is probably dependent upon a trick (or possibly several tricks), but, nevertheless, *what* the audience see is not the trick (or tricks) but the *result*

of trickery. In other words, the trick is the secret of which non-magical students know nothing, but the *effect* is common to all onlookers. For this reason never use the word "trick" before an audience, for to do so is to admit that you *do* employ various outside aids—the very thing you are trying to avoid! Your magical power alone is supposed to account for the wonders you perform.

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